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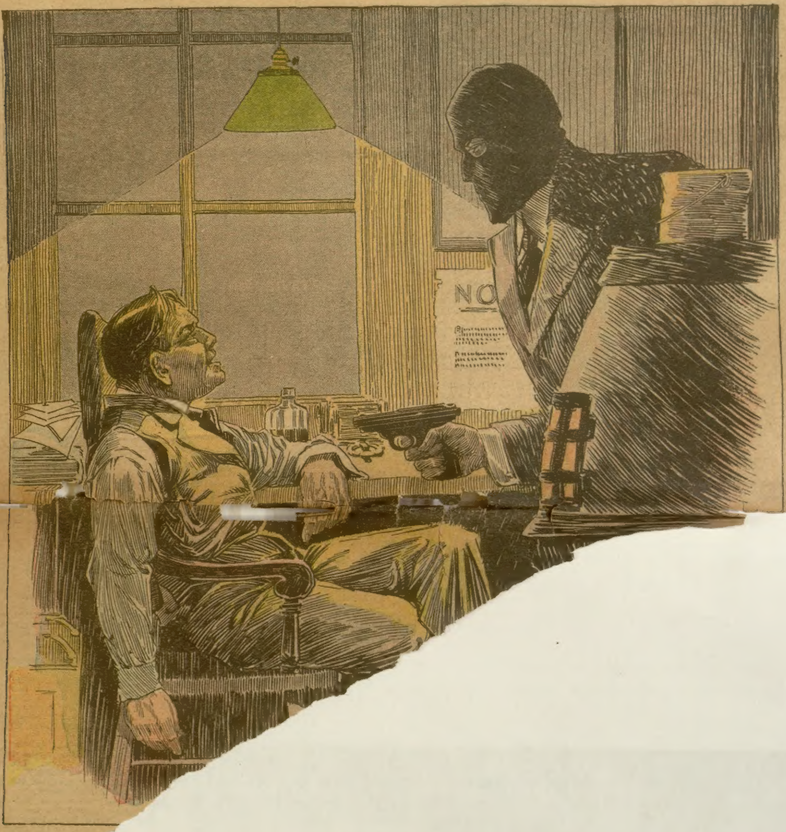

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I'll add a box of fliers to the five hundred shiners offered by the company if you bag him."

"It isn't a hunch; but he's more likely to show up now than at any other time. He has crawled away for a year to think up some new stunts and let folks forget about him.

"This will be the largest pay roll the Irrigation Company will handle. They will complete the job in another six months. The highway gentry can dig up those facts as well as a respectable citizen."

The hall boy interrupted them by announcing that Mr. Mooney was waiting to see Mr. Lewis.

"Who is he, and what does he want?"

"He said he is a patrolman, and must see you at once."

"Show him in."

As the superintendent took his visitor's measure across his desk, he mentally noted the small individual's mud-splashed overalls and jumper, his hobnailed shoes and freakish cap, which he grasped in both hands and held in front of him, also the boyish little grin that persisted in capering about the corners of his mouth. The superintendent fell down on the man's age. He might have been 25; but a second glance declared him to be much older. His general appearance and make-up gauged him to be somewhere between a fairly large boy and a very small man.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Mooney?"

"I'm a track-walker between Livingston Junction station and the culvert, midway to Wolfdale. I began work early this morning, as the cut a quarter of a mile east of Livingston Junction has been sliding some, and I wanted to make sure the track was clear for No. 29, due at 6:50.

"As I passed a pile of ties near the yard switch, I saw a pair of feet, which belonged to somebody standing on the other side. The ties are piled on ties laid crosswise to raise them off the ground. There is nobody around the station at that time of morning, so it was a safe guess that the owner of the feet didn't want to be seen; so I hummed a song to put him at his ease. When I got down the track far enough to see on both sides of the ties, my man was gone. I didn't give him cause for worry by looking back.

"When I found the cut was behaving itself, I put another man on my rounds, and went back and boarded No. 29."

"And you lost a day's pay, and rode a hundred and twenty-five miles to report that you saw a man at Livingston Junction. The road is encumbered with a president just now; but I am sure if the stockholders knew of this affair, they would accept his resignation."

The superintendent's caustic remarks did not destroy Mooney's grin.

the station work, and have come to the night trick

"One of these guys that carry all they know in their mouth blew in a week before that, and was set to holding down an old lady's job, tending the crossing and operating the yard switch. Unless he got cold, after midnight, it wasn't necessary for him to leave his bench more than six times. The yard master had been watching Atlas, as we dubbed the windy member, and had planned a red flag on him, and asked me to squint in the gatehouse on my way home.

"The brass mug had slops aboard—said he had to take something, or his rheumatism bothered him in wet weather. Then he set out to give me a nice, clear picture in United States language of just how many degrees of a chump I was to be working such unhuman hours in the rain and wind, and let a stranger like him come in and pick a snap. It was all in being able to talk intelligently and make a favorable impression on people, he informed me. I knew about where my gauge was pointing, and that if I didn't quit the vicinity I would just naturally blow up.

"I hadn't gone far before it was plain to me that I ought to go back and report how I found the health of the new president of the road, or else stick around until about two o'clock, when the last east-bound freight went thru, and the yard switch wouldn't be open again until the Big Chief was relieved. The Sun Trail express, west-bound, was due to go by an hour later; and if the drunken galloot forgot to close the switch, the engineer would be looking for clear rights, and would head into a freight car or a coal tub that would be decorating the siding.

"I had about twelve hours' sleep coming to me, and was just hanging on the ragged edge to hit the hay. The language dropped in the gatehouse got speeding around in my dome and whetted up my nerves to a fightin' edge and put my judgment to sleep; otherwise, I know that, tired as I was, I would have gone back and waited until the freight pulled out and the switch was locked.

"Well, I didn't, and three dead and a score hurt was the price. A missing gateman and an empty bottle was the evidence that let me pass without close questions. I told my story, but not all of it.

"For seven years I have been ready and waiting for a chance to redeem myself. I can't bring back those three lives; but I am willing to take chances where others might back down. If the gent of this morning tries to cop the pot next Friday night, I want to sit in the game. That's why I want the night trick for a week, so I can study the cards."

There was no grin on the face pushed toward the superintendent now. There was a danger signal in clear gray eyes, and a fightin into the voice.

"Assuming an attempt is made on the safe, what method will you pursue?" asked the superintendent.

would rather cover my cards. It's
and I want to play it alone.
about ninety-nine per cent
capture Black Mask, I for-
the reward. Even if
chances of his get-
tion are about one
me my pass-
my mother;
that go?"
What
too
is
t

reached a dark-colored bottle. He would turn it over in his clumsy hands and study it meditatively; then very deliberately take a small swallow, hold his treasure toward the light and sagely wag his head, as if his mental arithmetic satisfied him that it would last till morning. As an idea slowly crowded itself in among his muddled faculties, with an air of grave importance, he would address an imaginary listener and fumble the information with a tongue that had got beyond his control.

So sat the man who for seven years had waited an opportunity to make amends for a former breach of duty; who had planned a bold scheme to defend the ten-thousand-dollar pay roll in the safe, and capture the man who attempted to take it from him.

The night's work was nearly done. Mooney drew a drawer of his desk part way out, laid his legs across it, and sank down in his chair, a listless heap of flesh. He had just settled in this position to his satisfaction, when a low but distinct voice came from the far end of the room.

"Sorry to so rudely break in on the comforts of your work; but please step this way."

Mooney laboriously raised himself in his chair and blinked stupidly in the direction of the sound.

"Who're you—and whatcha want?"

"Come this way, please."

While those same words might have expressed a courteous request, as they were flung from the lips of the unseen speaker, they carried a subtle challenge—a warning: "Disobey at your peril."

"Come out and show yerself."

With an effort Mooney rose and stood swaying, one hand gripping the back of his chair.

"I don't like yer style of nosin' in here 'tall. Just take the 'dvice of un old frien' and git, while gittin's good. Understand?"

"Listen: I've come to relieve you of some of your responsibilities. You have a package in the safe that I want to keep for you. Come along and open the safe for me, then you can go back to sleep and know there's nothing to stay awake for.

"Be careful what you do with your hands; keep them at your side. I have an automatic here; and if it should happen to cough, it would drive the top button on your coat straight thru you."

Mooney had an inspiration. He spoke with drunken gravity.

"Come and have a drink. I'll spare yer jist one. Then we'll sit down and talk this mather over. I hain't got it all straight yit."

"The preachers say the Devil gives all the old timers a vacation when a man dies drunk, so he can amuse himself with the new member. Open the safe now, before this saucy little fire-spitter your soul

Mooney visibly apparently, for the first time, a realization of his danger stirred his blurred understanding. The chill of fear touched his thick utterance.

"Don't—don't turn yer gun loose, mister. I'll do anything you say; but, gosh, don't shoot!" and he shuffled toward the concealed gunman as rapidly as his heavy freight would allow.

He was halted by the feel of hard steel pressed between his shoulder blades. Instinctively, his hands went up. His visitor assured himself that Mooney was unarmed. Then he stepped in front of him. The man's face and head were covered with a black mask. There was a commanding earnestness in Black Mask's voice now, and a trace of im-

These are your orders, and
mixed. Take a lantern, go
the next room, and un-
me the package con-
Company's pay
drink the con-
have in my
desk. You
minutes;
rry

ment sprang ahead and tore a blank from what appeared to be a human form lying on the floor, near the safe.

For a fraction of a second Black Mask's heart seemed to be dropping into endless depths. His eyes were held by a compact heap of dynamite, enough to wreck the town. Mooney's voice brought him back with a jolt.

"Listen to my song. There are just two ways for you to leave this office. One is to go in the custody of the sheriff; the other is in a shower of flesh.

"Your gun is just as dangerous to you as to me. You can plug me; but the odds are one to a million your light would go out about a hundredth part of a second later. If your gun didn't set that fool killer working, I would when I fell. I have a death grip on this string. It is fastened to an electric switch just back of me. A pull will close it and send a current from a battery into a primer buried in the heart of that heap of stuff. If you go I go, too, all right; but there ain't so much black on my record as on yours. I'm telling you these little details so you will see why you've got to obey orders.

"The sheriff is a friend of mine, and I want you to invite him here to preside at this meeting. This is an up-to-date burg. There is a telephone on the wall behind you, brought in here for your accommodation. Four short rings will get him. I can't leave this string."

Black Mask's brain was again the cool, calculating machine that had never failed him. He made no move toward the telephone, but surveyed the little man with an appraising scrutiny. He raised his gun with a deliberate movement and poised it.

"I can light a match at twice this distance and not break it," he said slowly. "I am going to cut the large vein in your hand just where the string crosses it. That will——"

Mooney slid his hand along the string and placed it behind him.

"You have your orders," he said.

"What if I choose to disregard them?"

"Do you?"

"Yes."

"Then let's spend a minute or two praying, and we'll die together."

The voice was strange and unnatural, as coming from the lips of a brave man who accepted the awful extremity he was about to face as the unalterable decree of Fate. Black Mask lowered his gun.

The ticking of the clock in the next office filled the room. A far-away look came into Mooney's eyes. His lips moved. The bark of a dog floated in on the heavy night air from a great distance. A frightened mouse scurried across the floor. Then——

"Are you ready?"

"Don't! I'll the sheriff!"

TER III

SHERIFF WILLIAMS the ed of his bed and studied his prisoner. He was a marvelous specimen of physical man. About him was the indefinable dignity and grace of the gentleman. Yet the sheriff sensed in the background somewhere sources of tremendous energies, held in the grip of one who knew his powers. He had not spoken since he was taken into custody.

"Feel like talkin'?" asked the sheriff.

"Perhaps."

"You will be my guest of honor till the 7:04 pulls out. I reckon your story would keep me awake for a spell."

"It is no light comedy stuff; perhaps you wouldn't like it."

The keen sarcasm was not lost upon the sheriff.

"Sore 'cause you're caught?"

"Not at all. I have been expecting it for six years. It is a relief to know the suspense of capture is over. I was taken the way I wanted to be—on the job and by a man who was braver than I."

The prisoner again lapsed into silence.

"Somehow you seem out of place wearing them irons. You weren't born for that sort of thing."

Black Mask accepted the veiled invitation to tell his story.

"Unsuccessful love and the desire for revenge formed the trail that led me to
There have been many like me;
are many in the making.
hole life has been a grim fight
osing forces for self-mastery.
wn poverty. My father was
The tenth anniversary of
's a blank page in my his-
nd the universe stopped. A
n the spirit world sum-
her appointed place—
swered the call.
ght my way thru
familiar figure
letic fields of
f the coun-
hopes of a
upon the
thousand

great
all
the

"I was permitted by an indulgent fate to enjoy a few brief months of bliss. I still believe she reciprocated my feelings, and her father openly sanctioned my suit.

"One morning Mr. Powers introduced me to his new secretary—a Milton Boles. That moment Satan entered my Eden. Even at that first meeting I felt a strange repugnance for the man. Something in his manner of throwing his eyes and turning up one corner of his mouth suggested a wolf, sneaking and treacherous.

"I soon noticed he assumed authority far beyond his secretarial duties. Stranger still, Mr. Powers, who was a man who knew his own mind and seldom accepted suggestions from any one, deferred to Boles' opinions.

"From trustworthy sources, I learned that Boles was the principal in a racing pool in the East and had absconded with the funds. As gambling was illegal, he was never prosecuted.

"It was hell to me to see this man artfully ensnaring Alice Powers, the girl I loved. Life became an endless, hideous nightmare as I noted the ever widening gulf between her and me. Once I began to speak to her on the subject; and I shall always remember the strange, startled look that came into her eyes and her words, as they seemed to be wrung from her heart, as she put both hands against me and pushed me from her. 'Please don't,' she said; 'it would kill me to have to explain.' After that, we mutually avoided each other.

"As I look back now over my dreary waste of life, I can see I was weak and cowardly. I know she did not care for him, but he had some strange hold on her, which I might have broken. Regrets, it seems, make up the greater portion of the average life.

"When large constructions were in progress, it was Mr. Powers' practice to open a special account with the bank, and give me power of attorney to draw against it for special purchases of material, etc., when it was advantageous to give cash with order. Mr. Powers' methods were never questioned, and he reposed unqualified confidence in me.

"One night, as I was going up the winding walk on Mr. Powers' grounds, Miss Powers called me from a clump of shrubbery. Her great agitation made it difficult for her to speak. Her story was that she had overheard a conversation between her father and Boles, in which Boles had said a check for eight hundred dollars, signed by myself as attorney, had been cashed at the bank by the office messenger. The messenger was missing. This was the balance standing to the credit of the Makon account; but the construction work had been completed for some time. Mr. Powers and I had had hot words a week before. I was then on my way to inform him that I had accepted another position, and wished to leave his employ within the month. Miss Powers told me her father became violently angry, and shared Boles' belief that I had appropriated the money to my own use. He had already communicated with the police.

"She urged me to flee. I was innocent, and expressed my determination to face her father and Boles at once. Fate willed otherwise.

"From our place of concealment, we heard footsteps. Two officers came around the house. I knew their mission, and it would compromise Miss Powers were she found in hiding with me. I hurriedly told her to enter the house by the back entrance. I stepped out and faced the officers. I felt relieved when I heard Alice slip away.

"The officers stopped me, and one of them started to search the shrubbery. In doing so, I knew he would discover Alice before she could reach the house. This I must prevent at any cost.

"In a flash, the old fighting spirit of the football field came upon me. I was about to prove that the one-time most feared tackle in the game could not be taken by two ordinary cops. Both went down. One of them couldn't finish. The other rose and came after me. I tackled low, and the field was clear.

"I had now resisted the law and was already a criminal. From Alice's own words, she believed me guilty. As the thought came to me, the world went black. What mattered anything now? I made my way to the freight yard, boarded a train in hobo fashion, and James Moyes passed out into a new world to live under a new name.

"I drifted from place to place for a time. I have done all kinds of work from shoveling dirt to cow-punching. All my life I have lived on honest money. Not one penny that I have collected from behind a gun have I used as my own. I had accomplished my purpose when I had deprived the owners of its use. I was often forced to extreme self-denial. At such times, temptation all but mastered me. I had thousands in my grasp.

"In a day my whole career was again changed. I met a hobo. He had once belonged to the world I had left—my yesterday of life. He was the missing messenger who cashed the Makon check. The check, he told me, was handed to him by Boles. Mr. Powers was present when he returned from the bank, and Mr. Powers himself counted out three hundred dollars, handed it to him, and told him to leave the city. He informed me also that Alice Powers had disappeared and that her whereabouts were unknown. Milton Boles was an escaped convict, sent up for forgery, but had eluded the officers sent to take him, and was still at large.

"The loss of Alice had crushed my spirits; but to know that her father had deliberately blackened my career to satisfy a criminal who had perhaps wrecked his daughter's life, hardened me into what followed.

"I have forced tribute from every enterprise in which Mr. Powers is interested. Information which came to me when I was in his employ proved useful to me. With money that I had taken from him, I purchased the site of the Montana Irrigation Company's project. I sold it to him for another thirty thousand, plus my attorney's fee. The transaction was conducted under my new name. My lawyer deftly arranged matters, and I met neither Mr. Powers nor his agents.

"I was reckless and was willing to take the consequences. My life has been in danger a score of times. The enemy I feared most was a gang of hold-up men who followed my maneuvers and tried to get me after I had made a haul. They have fired at me three times; but they were either poor shots, or the Devil didn't want me. I have learned something of their methods, and would recognize two of their number. There are three of them.

"After this job was finished, I intended to go after them; but I have decided to leave that to those who make catching bad men their business," and Black Mask smiled grimly.

Both men were silent, thinking, but in different channels. The sheriff threw off the spell.

"Love is hell, ain't it? It's some beyond my reckoning; that's why I'm a bach. Yer real name James Moyes?"

The prisoner nodded. "They'll give me a number in a little while."

"Any notches on yuh gun?"

"I gave you my whole story."

"You mentioned money laid away somewhere. About how much is yer freedom worth?"

The prisoner flushed and searched the sheriff's face.

"The money isn't mine, and you wouldn't take it," he said in even tones.

The sheriff rose and placed his hand on his prisoner's shoulder, and his words dropped measuredly.

"Jim, I want to give you a new deal, and help you place your cards—but on three conditions: First, you help me land that gang you told me about—I've been after them for a year; second, turn your buried treasure over to the rightful owners; third, get back in plumb and stay there. Whatcha say?"

In silence the sheriff removed the shackles from his prisoner's wrists and ankles.

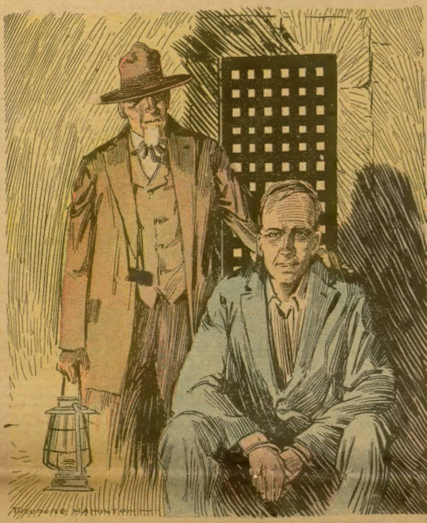
"Here's yuh gun and ammunition," he said; "you'll need 'em. You've escaped—understand? So keep under cover."

Black Mask started to speak. The sheriff interrupted him.

"I don't want yuh thanks—now. You have work before yuh. I'm doin' this to give you a chance to be a man again—to be whatcha might 'a' been; but if you string me, one of us is goin' to die an unnatural death, so help me God! Now, good luck!"

The two men gripped hands in silence, and Black Mask went out into the gray dawn.

This remarkable story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.



"You weren't born for that sort of thing!"

OLD TIMER'S LAMENT.

I long for the old campaignin',
  When the plain people didn't think,
When boodle was fairly rainin'
  And all the workers could drink.
When orators was oratin',
  With mighty yells from the boys,
An' bands was playin' like Satan,
  Drownin' the issues in noise.

Then, nobody asked no question,
  It wasn't considered polite;
If knowledge they started to test y' on,
  You promptly started a fight.
'Twas muscle they measured your
    wuth in,
  An' the way you could yell an' shoot.
Then nobody didn't know nothin',
  An' nobody keered a hoot!

But now they app'int commissions,
  To meet an' j'intly discuss
The ways and means and conditions,
  An' there ain't no place for us.
So me an' the ol' spellbinder
  Must beat it while we've the kale,
For I have a feelin', kinder,
  That these guys want us in jail!

* * *

On the Wagon.

"We will need about a dozen bottles of beer," suggested the man with the thoughtful expression. The scene was the edge of a little California desert.

"I shall require no beer," insisted the prohibition candidate. "No beer."

"Excuse me," suggested the man with the thoughtful expression, "but beer is a necessity crossing the desert."

The prohibition candidate made no retort. He had seen the driver hang a canvas bag full of sweet, cool water at the back of the auto and he estimated that this would be drink enough for him.

It was hot crossing the desert and the three men in the auto stage were fountains of perspiration.

They had ridden some distance before the driver detected the rear seat passenger taking a copious draft from the canteen.

"Here!" he yelled. "What're ye doin'? This water ain't for drinkin'! It's for the engine when she runs hot!" With that the driver took a look into the canteen and scolded because the water was more than half gone. Then he took the canteen and was in the act of pouring the rest of the water into the tank when the prohibition candidate yelled frantically:

"Here! Don't do that! That's all I have to drink!"

"You'll have to drink beer!" retorted the driver.

"Never! Give me back that water!"

"Well, how'll I cool my engine, then?"

"Use beer," insisted the candidate.

"If you're going to put beer in the radiator I'm going to ride in the back seat," declared the man with the thoughtful expression. And the prohibitioner, accompanied by his canteen, moved into the front seat beside the driver. Copious drafts of beer were poured into the automobile.

They had not gone many miles before the candidate commented on the offensive odor caused by hot brass and beer. He suggested that it was excessive. "Worse than any sober man can stand," agreed the driver, as he assuaged his thirst.

At about that time the auto began to act strangely. It cavorted giddily, as tho proceeding with one wheel in the air. It hicoughed, pitched and lurched. The driver said the machine was seeing double. The candidate began to feel dizzy, and when the time came to add more beer he rebelled.

"I cannot stand those dreadful fumes any longer," he said. "Take my precious water and I'll drink beer if necessary." And he did so, which accounts for the fact that the prohibitioner was not the least light-hearted of the party, including the auto, that arrived at Fuego, where the candidate was to deliver a lecture on the evils of drink.

* * *

Getting Married.

"Have ye heard the news?" said his wife to the contractor's foreman.

"No; pass me the potatoes."

"Young Owen is goin' to marry Julia."

"Is that so? Let me have some cabbage."

"Ye'd vex the saints in heaven! Is that all ye care about yere first-born?"

"He's ould enough to pick a wife. This corn bafe is fine."

"Ain't ye goin' to do somethin' to save the reputation av yer family?"

"As how?"

"The Lord forgive me, he says, 'As how?' an' young Owen is goin' to demane himself be marryin' Julia."

"Ould woman, do you raymimber whin I took pity on ye an' made ye me wedded wife? Yer mother thought I was a wolf thryin' to stale wan av her lambs."

"This is diff'rent. Young Owen, wid his grand eddication, is throwin' himself away upon Julia. I'm not sayin' anything against the gurrul, but how could she, whin young Owen becomes aldherman, or maybe Governor, attind to the social duties as wife av the great man young Owen is bound to be?"

"Now, see here, me darlint," said the contractor's foreman. "For male an' faymale to mate is the rule av life. The lion, the cat or the mouse raise no ructions whin their offspring wed, but whin our children want to inter the state av matrimony we parents think we know more about the matter nor our sons an' daughters, forgettin' the fact that at one time in our lives we were sons an' daughters oursilves. If they are av the same pitch, that means if their teeth will always ingage as they turn around, ivirything may turn out all right, but if the pitch av the two is not the same somethin' will smash an' the couple will find thimselves in the divoorce court, if nothin' worse happens.

"There may be a little throuble at first wid the gears av mátrimony, the rough surfaces av the teeth must be lubricated be the ile av ixperience, but be they av the same size, or does a little wheel be matched wid a big one, there's hope, if they're av the same pitch."

"Listen to him talk! Huh, you an' your pitches!"

"Yer father tould me yere mother wanted to marry ye to a juke or an earl, but he said he would be proud to have me as his son-lin-law."

The foreman winked at his daughter, who frankly gave her delighted attention to the controversy.

"What have ye agin Julia?" asked the foreman.

"She's a good enough gurrul, but not good enough for me son."

"That's what yere mother said about me. I wasn't good enough for her darlint Nora. But it wasn't long after we married that she sided wid me whin you an' I had our little spats. She knew I had betther sinse nor herself whin it came to me to pick a wife, an' young Owen knows betther nor you an' I do whin he's saylictin' his life mate. If he makes a mistake 'tis he that will have to suffer. Give me some more cabbage."

"If ye want cabbage go have yere hair cut." This remark for a minute or so was too deep for the foreman. Finally he saw the point and grinned.

THE SMUGGLER

-:- Or, -:-

We Three Girls

By Ella Middleton Tybout

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CHAPTER V.

AFTER all, it was Gabrielle who first opened the door in our wall of reserve and allowed Gordon Bennett to penetrate beyond it, and in the light of after events I was very glad, indeed, I was not responsible. It happened this way:

She had washed her hair and gone out in the sun to dry it, taking a book and a box of chocolates to help pass away the time, and, after wandering about a little, had established herself at the top of the flight of steps leading down to the boathouse, as the most secluded as well as the sunniest place she could find.

Gabrielle's hair is reddish brown, and when the sun shines upon it there are gold threads which glitter exceedingly, so we tell her she makes a point of going out of doors to dry it; but she says this is a slander, and she does it because fresh air and sunshine are good for the scalp. Anyhow, she went. And she also borrowed Elizabeth's ivory comb with the silver back, because its teeth are very wide apart, and therefore acceptable when it comes to getting out the tangles. Now, this especial comb is solely for ornament, and lies in state upon Elizabeth's dressing-table, with the brush beside it; they belong to a set brought her from Japan, and have associations which render them sacred, so I was astonished at Gabrielle's vandalism in proposing to desecrate it.

Just what really happened I don't know; I believe she got to dreaming out there in the sunshine, but this is what she said:

"I was sitting quietly reading when I heard a little thump, and there was that miserable comb balancing on the bottom step. Of course I went after it, and of course before I got there it toppled over and went thru a crack of the slip into the water."

"That slip is hoodooed," interrupted Elizabeth. "Why don't you do as I do, and keep away from it?"

"It was low tide," continued Gabrielle, "and I could look thru the crack and see it lying on the sand beneath the water, so I took a stick and tried to poke it out. I got along very well by progressing from crack to crack, but at the critical moment I got excited and poked too hard, and it shot out just beyond my reach. That made me wild, for I knew I couldn't face Elizabeth without it, so I simply lay down and grappled with my stick."

"Well?" I inquired, as she paused with a reminiscent chuckle.

"Well, as I was lying there with my face the color of a boiled lobster, fishing away for all I was worth, I heard a voice say: 'Allow me,' and there he was in a sailboat, the picture of coolness and comfort. He rolled up his sleeve, tho, and went to work, and finally got it, then calmly landed and introduced himself, saying something about having been unfortunate in his visits."

"Then was your opportunity to be dignified and squelching," I interrupted. "You should have frozen him with a glance."

"I tried to," she returned, "but all at once I remembered my hair, and who could be dignified then?"

"So you brought him home with you as a reward of merit," laughed Elizabeth. "I shall never forget how you looked as you came up the veranda steps."

"Yes," said Gabrielle; "and you two sat and stared as tho we had escaped from the zoo. Take your comb, Elizabeth; I never borrowed one before, and I never will again."

"I suppose," remarked Elizabeth, reflectively examining her recovered property, "we may be said to have dropped into his life; first your bag, then Elise's side-comb, and now this of mine. It's fate—we've got to know him, but it wasn't so bad, after all, was it?"

Indeed, we had all enjoyed the afternoon. Even Gabrielle returned to the veranda, with her hair as high up on her head as she could get it and with her most impressive manner, but we none of us referred to our trip up on the steamer, and our visitor departed without once mentioning our property in his possession, altho my side-combs were obviously not mates, which made me very uncomfortable.

Elizabeth asked him to come again, and when reproached for her cordiality said she did it only to please us, and quite expected to be bored to death herself; from which we knew she was very favorably impressed.

A sudden storm came up that afternoon and when Mr. Bennett rose to go the sky was very black and lowering, and the ocean roared ominously, so he left his boat tied to our slip and went up into the village to do some errands and wait until it should be over. Instead of a short squall, however, it settled down into a heavy rain, with howling easterly wind and tossing, turbulent sea, so he was obliged to spend the night in the village, as, of course, he could not cross to his island in his small boat.

It was our first real storm in the cottage, and as we heard the boom of the waves and listened to the wind sweep about our little home until it sometimes trembled upon its foundations, I must admit we were slightly nervous and could not settle to any occupation. So we gathered around our stone fireplace, lighted the driftwood Mary Anne had placed ready, and watched the wonderful green, lavender, scarlet and blue of the crackling flames in silence.

Elizabeth sat on the rug and leaned her head against Gabrielle's knee, and their faces gradually assumed the dreamy, far-away expression which means they have withdrawn into their own inner world, where outsiders may not follow them, and where memory and anticipation are softened by mutual interest and mutual affection. But I did not care, for I also had a little inner world with memories, and liked to anticipate the future, now very hazy and indistinct, to be sure, but filled with delightful possibilities and alluring in its very vagueness.

So I leaned back in my low wicker chair and built castles in the air, while the rain beat unnoticed against the windows and the surf thundered angrily upon the shore.

"What's that?" cried Elizabeth sharply, and with one accord we sprang to our feet.

For above the noise of the storm we had heard a crash, as of metal striking metal, and the fall of a heavy body, apparently right beneath us.

"It's the storm," said Gabrielle. "Only the storm."

But she was white and trembling as she spoke, and cast an apprehensive glance at the floor, as tho she expected it to open and engulf us.

"The cellar," whispered Elizabeth—"some one is down there."

Now, the cellar was a part of our abode we had not yet explored, so it had all the mystery of the unknown, and as we crept stealthily into the kitchen we experienced a sensation of standing over a bomb which might at any time explode and annihilate us. Gabrielle valiantly advanced to the door leading down into it, and opened it the fraction of an inch.

"Who is there?" she said, beginning bravely enough and ending with a quavering whisper.

Of course there was no reply, and we would have been frightened to death if there had been, yet we felt indignant at the stillness, as well as at the impenetrable darkness our eyes could not pierce. Gabrielle shut and locked the door.

"Shall we go down?" Her voice was rather tremulous, and she looked relieved when we shook our heads decidedly.

"If we only had a dog," I hazarded, "we could put it down ahead of us and find out if any one was there; but we haven't."

"No," agreed Elizabeth thoughtfully; "but we have Mary Anne."

As tho in response to her name, the outer kitchen door opened, and Mary Anne herself, wet, draggled and breathless, stood before us.

Her usually ruddy face was pale, and her eyes rolled wildly as she looked from one to the other, while her shawl slipped unnoticed to the floor, and we saw that her gown was badly torn and her arm scratched and bleeding.

"You've been out!"

It was Elizabeth who spoke, and her voice brought Mary Anne's wandering eye to a focus and held it a moment.

"Yes, miss."

She picked up her shawl and folded it carefully, smoothing the creases with trembling hands.

"It's a wild night, Miss Elizabeth," she said, with a shudder. "The storm got into me blood, miss, and sleep I couldn't fur thinking of them I knows who are maybe out on the sea, so I got me shawl and started fur me brother's 'ouse to see if 'e 'ad got 'ome safe and sound; but I couldn't git down the bluff, Miss Elise, the wind being that vi'lent it clean druv me back. And I stumbled, Miss Gabrielle, and 'urt meself ag'inst the side of the 'ouse, miss, as you kin see fur yerself. 'Ow, but it's a night! God save them out on the wide water."

Mary Anne paused for breath and looked curiously at us.

"But what are ye all in the kitchen fur?" she inquired in a more natural way. "Is it afraid ye are, too, and come out 'ere to look fur me to keep ye comp'ny?"

We told her about our fright, and she promptly reassured us, saying she had locked everything securely early in the evening, but would go down and investigate.

"I'll go with you and hold the light," I volunteered; but Mary Anne declined my society more firmly than politely.

"And what good would you be, Miss Elise—jumpin' at yer shadder and drippin' candle grease over me clean floor? No, thank ye kindly, I'll go alone; full well I know there's nothin' bigger than a rat down there."

It was very pleasant to hear her moving about, and when she called up to us with a laugh that the hanging shelf had fallen, coming down upon the coal shovel and scuttle, we laughed also, and felt a weight lifted from our hearts.

"Them ropes was rotten," announced Mary Anne, laboriously ascending the stairs, "and it's a mercy I didn't set the cream there to raise as usual, which, praise be given, I didn't. Don't you worry no more, but go to bed, and I'll make some chocolate to warm you like, for it's very comfortin' to the innerds on a night like this."

It was acceptable advice, and we gladly followed it, but as we left the kitchen I chanced to glance back and saw Mary Anne at the cellar door, her head bent and her whole bearing tense and alert—much the attitude of a dog who waits an expected command in its master's voice.

Yet when she appeared upstairs a little later, carrying a tray with three cups of steaming chocolate, and filled with motherly solicitude as to our comfort, she was merely a respectable, middle-aged servant, whose opinions one would receive with due respect. She had rearranged her dress, and her manner was quite natural and composed as she drew aside the curtain and looked into the night, with a comment on its wildness.

We joined her at the window, and as we stood looking out a beam of light pierced the enveloping darkness, casting a broad path across the black water, and we could see a little boat making its way around the point of the island—now riding the waves gallantly, now tipped so far to one side it seemed certain to capsize.

"Our friend the searchlight," remarked Gabrielle, in the tone of one who welcomes an old acquaintance, but a smothered sound as the little boat careened dangerously caused me to glance curiously at Mary Anne.

She was leaning against the window frame, and was evidently in pain, for her face was livid and her breath came in short gasps.

"It's nothing, Miss Elise," she muttered, as she caught my eye. "The dyspepsy kotches me around the 'eart now and then. And to think of some mother's son in that little cockleshell tonight. Come, now, get into bed and drink yer chocolate while it's 'ot."

"I think," remarked Elizabeth, as she sipped appreciatively, "that Mr. Bennett's boat will be beaten to pieces against our slip tonight. I wish we could get into the boat-house for such emergencies. You must make your brother get us a key, Mary Anne."

"Yes, miss," said Mary Anne, quietly.

I tried to say something, but found myself suddenly too sleepy to articulate, and saw Mary Anne retreat with the empty cups as tho thru a veil.

I slept heavily that night, and dreamed that Gordon Bennett made a boat-house of our cellar in spite of our remonstrances to the contrary. I also had a curiously vivid impression of Mary Anne and a candle passing and repassing my door, but when I tried to call out and ask her what she wanted I could make no sound, and could only struggle with the oppressed, smothering sensation which Elizabeth said always accompanied nightmare. I was willing to take her word for it, never having experienced it myself, but I did not like it, and mentally resolved to drink no more chocolate at night, if it produced such unwelcome after-effects.

CHAPTER VI.

IT WAS a very beautiful world which greeted us the morning after the storm, all swept and garnished and freshly painted for our delectation.

I wish I could describe it, as we stood upon our veranda drinking in the life-giving ozone and feasting our eyes upon the landscape. Perhaps if I were an artist I could better express the bright azure of the sky, the deeper blue of the sparkling ocean rippled with white-capped waves, the wonderful clearness of the atmosphere, and the glorious sunlight gilding everything until the commonest objects were endowed with a charm hitherto unsuspected.

I had wakened tired and unrefreshed, and both Gabrielle and Elizabeth looked rather pale and heavy-eyed, so we decided to spend the day at home, and established ourselves upon the veranda for one of the long, lazy mornings in which we frequently indulged.

Lady Edith Campbell soon joined us, fresh and dainty in her pretty morning costume and simple hat, and we greeted her with enthusiasm.

"Wilfrid has gone fishing," she remarked, as she removed her hat, "and as he means to be away all day, I shall not be missed. How very cozy you all look, and what a wonderful morning, is it not?"

"If storms bring days like this," remarked Gabrielle, from the hammock, "I shall not care how often they come."

"Oh, shall you not?" replied Lady Edith, with a little shiver. "I do not believe I agree with you. Last night was terrible even in the village; what it must have been in this exposed place I cannot imagine. I am always afraid of the wind, and then, too——"

She paused uncertainly and looked at us.

"Such a dreadful thing happened! Do you care to hear hotel gossip?"

We hastened to assure her that we loved all gossip, hotel or otherwise, and she resumed.

"Well, last night Mrs. Bundy, the fat old lady who had the table next to ours, you know——"

"Who wore a diamond sunburst on her forefinger and headlights in her ears," interrupted Gabrielle.

"And came to breakfast in a velvet teagown, with an emerald necklace," supplemented Elizabeth. "Of course we remember her. Did she die of apoplexy or anything?"

"She was robbed," said Lady Edith, gravely. "All her jewels were taken, and they were very valuable. Poor old woman! Was it not dreadful? She is in a state of hysterical collapse this morning, and who can wonder?"

"Robbed!" I exclaimed incredulously.

"Yes, robbed. It makes one very uncomfortable, does it not? They say it is the work of an expert, and have put the matter into the hands of the police, hoping to recover the jewels."

"Whom do they suspect?"

"I do not know;" she hesitated a moment, then resumed quietly: "You see, the hotel was crowded last night with strangers storm-bound on the island, and it will be difficult to form an opinion. Mrs. Bundy was alarmed at the storm, and spent most of the night in her daughter's room. It is probable the thief got in then, or when she was at dinner."

"But," objected Elizabeth, "it must have been some one who knew she had them. It could not have been a stranger."

"One can never tell," said Lady Edith thoughtfully. "But I confess it has made me nervous. I did not bring many jewels, fortunately, but I have my mother's pearls and a few other trinkets I would not care to lose, and I do not know what to do with them, since it appears unsafe to trust things in one's room, even if they are securely put away. Mrs. Bundy insisted that she locked up her emeralds with her own hands, and had the key on a ribbon around her neck."

"I am glad we left when we did," I remarked as she paused. "Not that I am burdened with jewels, but it must be awfully unpleasant."

"It is," she agreed; "one is inclined to look suspiciously at one's neighbors, not to mention servants. As for me, I have put my treasures in this box and carried it with me everywhere this morning. I would not even trust my maid, who has been with me for years. I do not know what in the world to do with them, and am more than half inclined to dig a hole and bury them deep and safe."

She gave a vexed little laugh as she spoke, and raised a box wrapped in white paper which she held on her lap, and which had appeared to contain bonbons.

"I'll tell you," said Elizabeth, impulsively. "Leave them here. There is a little iron safe under the china closet in the dining-room. I can't imagine why it was put there, for it is not big enough to hold much silver, even if we had anything but the most obvious plate; but it possesses two padlocks, and you could lock it and keep the keys."

"Do you really mean it?" said Lady Edith, incredulously.

"Yes—why not? I'm sure we won't be pursued for our valuables, and, if you will take all responsibility for leaving them, you are more than welcome to the exclusive use of the safe—isn't she, girls?"

Of course we agreed willingly, and were quite repaid by the look of relief in her big brown eyes and the pretty, eager manner with which she endeavored to express her gratitude.

"Let us put them away at once and get them off our minds," suggested Gabrielle, springing from the hammock and leading the way to the dining-room.

So we opened the door—which looked like an ordinary wooden panel below the corner closet—and disclosed the little iron safe with its two padlocks—both so rusty from disuse that it took all the strength I possessed to turn the keys.

"There!" I remarked, handing them to Lady Edith and closing the outer wooden door. "Now you can rest in peace."

"You have removed an incubus from my shoulders," she said, with a quick display of dimples, "and I am more grateful than I can express. I should not have had an easy minute after Mrs. Bundy's experience, altho I am inclined to believe it was one of the strange men who spent the night here, rather than a guest or servant of the hotel. I would rather think so.

"And do you know," she continued thoughtfully, "my maid says that several of these men left very early, without waiting for breakfast—as soon as it was light, in fact. That in itself seems suspicious, under the circumstances, but then, as I have said, every one is inclined to suspect every one else, and it is all very horrid and uncomfortable. Now, do let us go outside again, and not waste this glorious day."

We had a delightful morning, for our guest was even more charming than usual. There was a subdued exhilaration in her manner, and an exuberance of spirit we had never seen before; her cheeks were softly pink, and her eyes shone, as she chatted merrily of various things after the fashion of girls the world over. In her softened mood, with the grande dame manner laid aside, she was quite irresistible, and I found myself wondering why her left hand bore neither wedding nor engagement ring, and whether she as well as her brother had an unhappy romance to be lived down and forgotten.

She did not, however, convey the impression of a lovelorn damsel, for a more radiant creature I have never seen. By the time lunch was over we felt as tho we had known her always, and were planning a summer abroad, part of which was to be spent at her father's castle in Scotland.

"I hope," she added, "that Wilfrid will have quite recovered his poise before you come over, and you can see him as he really is—such a dear fellow! And then, who knows what might happen? One of you might be induced to stay in the Old World, for we have many friends, and American girls are very popular, you know."

After lunch Elizabeth declared her intention of going down the cellar to see what it was like, saying that it made her very uncomfortable not to know what she lived over; but she returned immediately, with a most disgusted expression.

"Mary Anne is scrubbing," she announced, "and the whole place is as wet as the ocean. I'll have to wait until tomorrow. Just now I would need a boat."

"What's the use of bothering?" inquired Gabrielle, placidly. "It would not worry me if I never explored the cellar. Just so I know it's there. I don't care what it looks like."

"Well, I do," returned Elizabeth, "and I'm going down there the first thing in the morning, if I don't forget it."

"Suppose we walk down to the wharf in the village," suggested Lady Edith, "and meet Wilfrid. We might induce him to take us for a sail."

But I still felt very indolent and preferred the hammock, with its many pillows and cool breeze, to the long, hot walk to the village, so the other three started cheerfully off, leaving me to my own devices.

For a while I swung idly to and fro, watching the dancing water and admiring the effect of the sunlight on the occasional sail which ventured around the point from the island colony on the other side. I was thinking in a desultory way of poor Mrs. Bundy and her lost emeralds, and of Lady Edith and her mother's pearls, and wishing she had opened the box and shown them to us before locking them away, when I heard a step upon the gravel path, and Gordon Bennett lifted his cap and smiled amicably upon me, as tho he were quite in the habit of paying us daily visits.

I noticed then what white teeth he had, and how he smiled with his eyes as well as his lips, but this is an unimportant digression.

"I apologize for coming so often," he remarked, appropriating a comfortable chair. "My excuse is that I wish to return your property. I forgot it yesterday."

He drew Gabrielle's bag from his pocket as he spoke, and regarded it affectionately.

"At least," he continued, "I suppose it belongs to one of you; I found it on the steamer coming up, you know, just where you had been sitting."

I acknowledged our ownership of the property, and extended my hand for it, but he held it thoughtfully, as tho unwilling to relinquish it.

"Would you mind," he said at last, with some hesitation, "telling me why when I started to bring you this bag, that night on the steamer, you all turned and fled as tho I had been a carnivorous animal?"

There was a twinkle in his eye which made me hotly resentful, altho I tried to preserve a cool and indifferent manner.

"Would you really like to know?"

"Pining to be told; I have lost valuable sleep trying to work it out."

"Well, we thought you were crazy."

"Why, please."

His voice was genuinely astonished, and I plunged at once into an explanation I hoped would be satisfactory.

"You see, it was those chairs you threw overboard. It was such an extraordinary thing to do. And Gabrielle said you muttered when you did it."

"Is that all?" Relief and amusement struggled for supremacy in his voice, and I felt myself flushing uncomfortably.

"I think it's quite enough," I returned irritably. "No men in their senses go around throwing chairs overboard."

"And is that why I got the cold shoulder when I called?"

"Of course."

Mr. Gordon Bennett laughed then as he has never dared laugh since when referring to that subject, for we don't like to talk about it, as it makes us appear rather foolish.

"I am glad it amuses you," I remarked, in my most frigid manner, which I have been told is extremely chilling.

"Oh, I say," he said quickly, "don't look at it that way. Why, it was nothing, after all. I had made two trips on that old boat this summer, and one of those dilapidated chairs broke down with me and nearly pitched me overboard. I complained, but the company would not get new ones, which put my back up a bit, so I got into the habit of examining them, and when I found one weak in the back or legs I just pitched it overboard. That wasn't so bad, was it? Of course I never thought how it looked, and I did 'mutter,' but I'm heartily glad you did not hear what I said."

It was a very simple explanation—so simple, in fact, that I felt provoked it had not occurred to me, and I hated to think how he would relate the incident to his friend Mr. Blake, and how they would laugh over it. So I merely looked out at the ocean and made a frosty, impersonal remark about the view.

But instead of the familiar landscape I found myself looking straight into two very blue eyes with a trace of anxiety in them, and a sunburned hand was extended toward me appealingly.

"Let's shake and be friends," he said heartily. "I'm sorry I alarmed you, but I'm glad I found out my offense. I was determined I would know what it was. When the General wrote me his daughter was here, and I discovered who it was, I was delighted, for of course I saw you all on the boat, and I wanted awfully to know you. You don't mind my saying so? Then when I got snubbed so unmercifully I could not understand it. Shall we start all over again, and will you explain to your friends that I am in possession of all my senses and hope to keep them a while longer?"

Well, it was impossible not to smile also, and indeed I was very glad of a chance to descend gracefully from my high horse, so we shook hands gravely and started all over again, as he had suggested.

I inquired where he spent the night, and he mentioned the hotel we had deserted, so I told him about the robbery. He had heard nothing, having left very early in the morning, meaning to sail home in time for breakfast.

I asked him if his boat suffered any ill effects from the storm, and his manner grew all at once constrained and ill at ease, so I changed the subject, fearing that it might have been irrevocably damaged against our slip, and feeling somewhat responsible. I spoke of the cottage, and how we enjoyed life here, and the contrast it was to the hotel.

"Yes," he said absently; "it's a jolly little place. But, tell me, how did you hear of it, and how did you manage to get it? I understood it was not for rent."

I told him he was mistaken; that we had no trouble at all in securing it, and that the rent was ridiculously low, all things considered.

"I would like to know to whom it belongs," I remarked. "I understand it was some woman's whim, and she has tired of it. Perhaps we might get some of our relatives to buy it and come here every summer."

"Don't you know anything about it?" He was looking at me curiously now.

"Not a thing," I said lightly; "do you?"

A dull red flush was distinctly visible beneath his coat of tan as he replied to my question.

"I'm not a native, you know. I was here for a bit last year, and I liked it; so when I had a chance to buy an island, house and all, I jumped at it. But I'm not wise about my neighbors. I do know that this cottage was occupied last summer, and I heard the people were very unsocial and never received a guest or entered the village while they were here; and, of course, there were stories. Gossip flourishes on a mystery, you know."

"Well," I returned, "I don't care how mysterious the former tenants were, but I'm glad they did not come back. Perhaps they were in mourning, or invalids, or something of that sort."

"No doubt," he agreed hastily; "no doubt."

And then we changed the subject and talked of other things till the sound of voices and laughter told me Elizabeth and Gabrielle were returning from the village. They brought Lady Edith and Lord Wilfrid both home with them to dinner, and it was not difficult to persuade Mr. Bennett to stay also, so we had the first of some very merry repasts, where morning costumes were allowed, and where Mary Anne, to quote her own words, "dished up hanythink that came 'andy and prayed the Lord it would be enough."

That night I asked Gabrielle to look in her bag and give me my side-comb; but she found that it was not there, and that our picture also was missing.

"We will ask for it the next time we see him," remarked Elizabeth. "I don't think it is very nice in him to have taken it out."

"Oh, no," I objected; "don't say anything about it. I don't want to give him the satisfaction of knowing we missed it."

And we all agreed that this was our most dignified course.

CHAPTER VII.

ELIZABETH inspected the cellar next morning, and I went with her, by request.

"Not that I'm afraid," she explained elaborately; "but it is always nicer to have some one to speak to, and, besides one of you, at least, ought to take an interest in such things."

It looked very much like other cellars, with paved floor, coal bins, and so on, except that it ran far back, forming a sort of alleyway, which was very dark and unprepossessing and seemed to be a repository for old boxes, bits of paper, kindling wood, and the usual accumulated trash of a household. At the extreme end an empty packing case large enough to have contained a piano rested against the wall, which looked and smelled very damp and moldy.

Elizabeth glanced about and curled her lip contemptuously; the zeal of the born housekeeper shone in her eye, and I knew she had visions of nicely whitewashed walls, with eminently proper receptacles for kindling and waste paper, and foresaw trouble ahead for Mary Anne.

We could hear the ocean outside, for the cellar was an excavation in the bluff, and it conveyed such an unpleasant impression of a vault-like cave that I was not sorry when Elizabeth proposed an adjournment.

"And here is the hanging shelf," I remarked, as I almost ran into it. "Mary Anne has lost no time in putting it up again—on chains this time, so I hope it is safe."

"How rusty they are!" said Elizabeth, pausing to examine. "They look as tho they had been here for years, but I suppose they are old ones she found somewhere. This place must be well aired; it is awfully musty."

She gathered up her skirts as she spoke, preparatory to going up the steps, and I was about to follow when something caught my eye, and mechanically I stooped and picked it up from a crack between two bricks.

"Have you lost anything?" called Elizabeth from the stairs.

"No," I replied; "I have found something. Look here."

Together we examined my discovery as it lay in the palm of my hand—a man's cuff link of dull, raised gold, the head of the Sphinx on one side and the under link shaped like a small key.

Elizabeth turned it over curiously.

"It must have belonged to the people who were here last year," she conjectured. "It's very pretty, isn't it? I never saw one anything like it."

"Look, Mary Anne!" I exclaimed, as we entered the kitchen. "See what I have found."

Mary Anne advanced willingly, but as I raised the button by the little key and held it toward her, her jaw dropped suddenly and the color forsook her ruddy face.

"Where'd you find it, miss?"

"In the cellar, right by the steps."

"You've—been—down in the cellar?"

"Certainly; why not?"

Mary Anne wiped her face with a corner of her gingham apron, and poked wood into the stove with reckless prodigality.

"It's entirely too fore'anded you are, Miss Elizabeth," she grumbled—"the cellar lookin' like distraction and you goin' down there the fust time! What kind of 'ousekeepin' do you think I do? This very day I laid out to put everything shipshape down there and take you around meself. And the cellar's damplike, and no place fur a lady any'ow, and you like to take cold and sneeze yer 'ead off!"

Elizabeth laughed and assured her that this catastrophe was not liable to happen today, and suggested that the cellar might be improved by the introduction of fresh air and sunlight.

"And how soon you got the shelf fixed!" she added, by way of soothing Mary Anne's ruffled feelings.

"Shelf?" she repeated vaguely. "Oh, of course, miss. 'Ow could I git along without it? And what else did ye find in the cellar, Miss Elise, besides the little button?"

I thought she watched me keenly as I replied I had not looked for anything more, and wondered she had not seen it on her trips up and down the steps.

"Me eyes are not so good as they once were, nor so bright as yours, Miss Elise," she remarked. "It's a pretty thing, now isn't it? What will you be doin' with it?"

But I did not reply, for Gabrielle, who had been to the village for the mail, now appeared, and Elizabeth immediately lost interest in everything else.

I do not wish to arouse false suspicions, but Elizabeth certainly wrote a great many very long letters, and received volumes all in the same handwriting, which always arrived on certain days of the week. She used to open them with an air of indifference and glance over them carelessly, then in a few minutes she would make some excuse to be off alone, and we could sometimes see her poring over them, dead to the world as she turned page after page, and smiling a smile which exasperated Gabrielle exceedingly, altho she also did not a little corresponding on her own account that summer.

Today, however, she handed Elizabeth her letter without comment, and only glanced casually at the cuff link when I displayed it in triumph, for she was eager to relate the news she had accumulated during her trip to the village.

"You know that smuggler?" she began, seating herself on the kitchen doorstep and removing her hat.

"No," I interrupted; "I'm happy to say I don't know him."

"You know about him, don't you? It's all the same thing. Well, I've been to the hotel, and I heard that he is suspected of having been on the island the night of the storm, and they think"——she dropped her voice cautiously—"they think he took Mrs. Bundy's emeralds."

"Who thinks so?"

"Oh, the detectives, of course. Lady Edith told me. And they say it was a very foolish thing for him to do, because he can now be arrested in Canada. And our Government officials are perfectly wild, too, for a whole lot of things were smuggled in somehow right under their noses."

"Is he on the island now?"

"Oh, no. As Lord Wilfrid said, it would be madness for him to stay here now. He must have been one of the men who left the hotel so early that morning—before Mrs. Bundy discovered her loss. They are following them up, of course, but it was easy enough to register a false name and address. I can forgive his smuggling, but I can't forgive his robbing that poor old woman—she's just scared to death, and expects to have her throat cut every night, they say—so I hope they will catch him."

"Don't be 'opin' that, Miss Gabrielle;" it was Mary Anne who spoke, and she stood listening to the story with dishcloth in one hand and plate in the other. "Don't be 'opin' that. Remember the mother what bore 'im, and them that loves 'im, be 'e what 'e may."

"Well," said Gabrielle, "his mother should have brought him up better, that's all I've got to say about it; and I do hope he'll be caught and punished. Give us something good for lunch, won't you, Mary Anne? I'm starving.

"And, Elise," she continued, "I made an engagement for us all to go sailing this afternoon with the Campbells. And do you know—I almost forgot to tell you—the guests at the hotel had to submit to having their trunks searched. I think it was insulting, but Lady Edith said she thought it only right."

"But, Gabrielle," said Elizabeth, tucking her letter inside her shirtwaist, to be brought forth in private later, "you forget I told Mr. Bennett he could bring his friend Mr. Blake this afternoon. I meant to have tea on the veranda."

"So you did. Well, we can all come home about four o'clock."

"And I'll be ready fur you," promised Mary Anne eagerly. "Don't you fash yerself, Miss Elizabeth; I'll have everything laid out and ready, and I'll make you some nice little cakes, too, and 'ave them 'ot and ready, fur well I know you'll all be 'ungry."

So when Lord Wilfrid sailed to our little slip that afternoon he found us waiting for him and quite prepared for a good time. There was a nice breeze, and the sea was not too rough, so we thoroly enjoyed ourselves and made a tour among our neighboring islands, admiring the handsome residences with which they seemed to abound.

"But I would just as lief have our cottage on the bluff as any of them," declared Elizabeth, contentedly, and we all agreed with her.

We sailed so near the American shore that we could distinguish the signs on the wharf of the little town where the boat landed, and Gabrielle proposed going ashore and looking around a little. Lord Wilfrid busied himself with his sail for a moment, then turned and looked steadily at his sister.

"Shall we land, Edith?" he said. "The

(Continued on Page 16.)

THE QUADROON'S HATE

Or, One Man's Folly

By Ella Martin

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEPARTURE.

AT HASTINGS PLACE all was confusion. Servants were running to and fro, carrying out their master's instructions. For Mr. and Mrs. Hastings were taking their daughter away where the days of her convalescence would be free from reminders of her trouble. Lois was to accompany them, for the sham marriage of that eventful night was a tragedy in her life little less than the one that had overtaken her sister. Ila, her lover's fate unknown to her, lived despairingly, always in apprehension of the worst; while Lois' life was left empty, desolate. For her love was dead—aye, worse than that. The memory of it was disgusting, degrading to her self-respect. She sometimes envied her sister, for the uncertainty of what had happened at the Crossroads that fatal night left room for hope that eventually all might be well.

One good thing at least had come out of their trouble; her father had forsworn his enmity toward Cecil Lynd. It was rather late, to be sure, for had it not been for this unreasonable animosity Ila might now have been happy with her chosen mate, out in the fair, free country of the West; and the change of brides that had caused comment thruout the neighborhood would never have taken place.

Lois was anxious to go away, where the eyes of the friends who came often to Hastings Place to inquire after Ila's health could no more rest pityingly upon her. True friends they were, and it had been necessary to explain matters to some extent. So, considering all things, the Hastings family was glad to go on this trip, and cared not how long their absence might be prolonged. They might never return. Mr. Hastings told his family, for the plantation was heavily mortgaged; and now that his scheme to retrieve his fallen fortunes with the aid of the Charlston millions had failed, he expected the crash to come at any time. He hoped to save something from the wreck, however. His eyes were open at last to Lloyd's true character, but he was too crushed by Ila's illness to think of dealing with him personally, as he would have done in his younger days.

Electra was to accompany them as Ila's maid. But before they left she stole a few minutes to take leave of Mose, with whom she had become quite well acquainted. He was waiting for her in the summerhouse, where Nepha had once interviewed her and opened her eyes to Sam's treachery.

"Sho,' now, you black man!" she cried playfully, as Mose slipped his arm around her trim waist. "What for yo' go spoonin' dat way? I's goin' away, I is, an' I may neber come back."

"Yas, yo' must come back, 'Lectra; mammy done laik yo' most as well as I does. We can all lib in de house in de woods. I sells garden truck 'nuff ter keep us all. We'll be happy dar, 'Lectra. What for you be my sweetheart, if yo' doan 'tend to marry me?" Mose finished wistfully.

Electra hung her head. She had cultivated Mose's acquaintance for spite. And the culmination of her triumph had come to pass when she had contrived to meet Sam several times while in Mose's company. She had turned him down completely, and he had shown that he did not relish being cast aside for another. Meanwhile she had come to care for Mose more than she had believed possible.

"I will shor' come back when de mistress comes," Electra finally answered. "I belong to Hastings Place; but some day I'll marry yo', Mose. I lubs yo', and I laiks yo' mammy and daddy."

"Dat am de way I laiks to hear yo' talk," exclaimed Mose, elated. "I'll wait fo' yo', 'Lectra."

And so these humble sweethearts parted, happier far than their superiors, to whom love had brought only sorrow.

The rest of the servants were to remain under the supervision of an old negro couple, and were to till the soil and market the produce for themselves until the wanderers returned.

Ila was frail and still weak. She was trembling when led out to the car by her mother and Lois. Mr. Hastings looked after the luggage, directing the servants about placing it securely in the trap, which was to follow them to the station. Then in silence they drove down the tree-bordered avenue until the reached the highway. The two girls glanced back at the great porticoed mansion, the green terraces and flowering shrubbery, with a sigh of regret. It had been a domicile of happiness all the years of their girlhood, and now everything was changed. It could never seem like home to them again.

Ila had but one regret in leaving so soon. It was that she had not seen the quadroon who had promised to aid them in finding out what had become of Cecil. The fact that Nepha had not been near her since, tho a week had elapsed, indicated that she had not been able to keep her promise. She wished she might have seen her before leaving the place, perhaps forever.

A desultory conversation was kept up during the drive, for they must needs pass the Crossroads, and farther on the avenue that led to Charlston Hall. Ila grew faint as the car sped past the fatal spot, where she had found Cecil—dead, as she had believed. But she remembered long afterward the dust-covered flowers by the wayside. It was with a heart numb with despair that she rode on, and only Lois noticed the turn-off that led to Charlston Hall. The great building that had once had such appearance of grandeur in her eyes just now seemed to wear a sinister look. She knew what life there was about the place was among the negro cabins in the edge of the grove that stretched away to the river's brink. For Lloyd had gone away, none knew where. He would doubtless return, she thought, now that they had left without trying to molest him.

At that very moment Nepha, the quadroon, was crossing the fields on her way to Negro Jim's, in answer to Mose's urgent message, postponing her visit to Hastings Place until she could learn if the child was in danger. The two girls, sitting in the tonneau, saw the lone figure walking swiftly in the opposite direction, but neither dreamed it was she on whom they depended to get trace of Cecil Lynd.

Mrs. Hastings turned to take one last look at the home in which she had spent her married life, most of it in tranquillity and happiness.

"If we ever return," she remarked to her husband, who sat by her side driving the car, "I hope it will be under happier circumstances."

"It certainly will," he replied, "or we will never return."

None of the women had asked questions concerning their destination; they believed they were going to some health resort where Ila might grow strong and well again. Therefore, when Mr. Hastings showed them the tickets he had bought, there were exclamations of surprise and pleasure, and in Ila's eyes dawned a light of hope. Lois also felt a gratification she could not understand.

"Oh," she cried, looking gratefully at her father, "you changed your mind at the last moment, didn't you?"

"No," he returned, with a smile, "my mind was made up from the beginning; but I kept it for a surprise."

At that moment the incoming train stirred the party to action, and soon they were all aboard.

Meanwhile Nepha, having reached the house in the woods, went straight to Chloe to learn the import of Mose's message to her. The negress was seated in her spick-and-span kitchen, watching the gingerbread she had in the oven.

"Tell me what it is, quickly," she demanded. "Has some one from the Hall followed me and discovered where it is I go so often?"

"I declar' ter goodness, chile, I doan know nothin' 'bout dat 'ar. But if dey hab, we can hide dem deeper in de wood in de cabin whar nobody libs now."

Nepha caught the negress by the arm. "What do you mean, Chloe? Hide whom? Is my sister here?"

"Yo' hab guessed it, honey. She am here, and she am bound ter take de boy an' run away. Dat am why I sent fo' yo', Miss Nepha."

"She must not be allowed to leave this place!" Nepha cried. "She might run afoul of that villain who is trying to get both herself and her child into his clutches."

"Dat am jest what she am tryin' ter do-run afoul ob him, I suspicion," said Chloe, convincingly.

"What?" Nepha almost shouted, and without waiting for a reply, ran out of the kitchen and up to Lygia's room. She found the door locked; but in casting her eyes along the floor she espied the key lying at the other end of the hall. She darted forward and secured it, and had the door open in a twinkling. Trembling with eagerness, she swept the room with her gaze. It was unoccupied.

"Not here!" she gasped. "Ah, I understand it all! That reprobate has gotten her under his influence again. She has taken her child and gone to him. It means death to them both unless I can prevent it. They have gone straight to their doom!"

Nepha's dark eyes were filled with a wild excitement. If there was anything on earth that this passionate girl really loved, it was her sister Lygia. She had been obliged to watch over Lygia, because, unlike herself, her sister had been given no advantage of education, and she had come to feel a mother's tenderness toward the orphan girl. She had taught her, not only from books, but in ways of refinement; and Lygia had been an apt pupil.

The quadroon felt no wrath toward Lygia, only pity and a wild fear that Lloyd had schemed to get his wife and child into his power for their undoing. She hastened down the stairs and back to the kitchen. Chloe was just taking the gingerbread from the oven. Nepha cast a longing glance toward the spiced dainty. She was hungry and over-tired. But she did not dream of resting now; she must find Lygia first.

Chloe saw the eager glance at the warm gingerbread and noted the fatigued look in the eyes of the quadroon; and placing the baking tin on the table, she forced the girl into a low rocker beside it, while she prepared a tempting lunch and placed it before her. Nepha was compelled to eat, no less from Chloe's persuasion than from her own physical weakness.

"Dar, honey," coaxed the negress, when she had finished, "now tell me all about it."

Nepha drew a long sigh of weariness. "Chloe," she said, rising, "I am tired to death; but Lygia and her child are gone, and I must go and find them."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake!" Chloe exclaimed. Then she sprang forward and caught the swaying form of the quadroon as, exhausted, she sank back in the rocker, unconscious!

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING FOR HOME.

SIX weeks had passed since Cecil Lynd had met with foul play at the Crossroads. And now, one morning in late summer, the physician under whose care he had been discharged his patient as entirely cured. At last the hour he had longed for with all his heart had come. He was free to go to Ila now, and assure her that he lived and that he still loved her. His anxiety on her account had helped delay his recovery. But now it was all over, and he stepped forth into the sunshine and balmy atmosphere of that day a new man.

"I feel fit as a fiddle," he remarked to Avon Walters, as they stepped from the conveyance that had taken them to the railroad station. "And now for Hastings Place. Whether Brand Hastings is willing to stick by his word as concerns his attitude toward me, matters not at all. I will see Ila, if I have to walk over him after knocking him down."

Avon smiled. "What a tragedy it would be if you should walk over him before knocking him down," he remarked.

"Don't get facetious; I mean it. And I'll take Ila away with me openly, if I have to resort to my friend here," and he touched the pistol in its holster. "It is what I ought to have done before."

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cious. She has a grievance of her own, for the settlement of which I have spoken. So hands off! That duty belongs to me.

"But say, Cecil, you'll get arrested for going armed, if not for your braggadocio," Avon grinned, his eyes taking fire with the spirit that was reviving his friend. "Let's manage to get out of the city before we begin any fireworks. We can't handle all of Richmond, if we are from the West. It is bad enough to be confined in a hospital—let us avoid being jailed."

Cecil looked at his comrade, who had been his bodyguard as well, of late, with an affectionate gaze. "Say, old sport," he said, softly, "you have been about the same as jailed for the last few weeks, haven't you? Well, you shall have your reward. I know where your heart is, and I have the greatest sympathy for your inclinations and the greatest admiration for your taste. And I promise you that we will take Lois with us, also. I don't care a rap whether Brand Hastings is willing or not. I am getting desperate now, and am thru with maneuvering with my enemy. I will help you get that girl, if we have to ride roughshod over his wishes. I would have married Ila openly, if her father had given me a chance. But no, because his grandfather had a spite against mine, he refused his consent. Now I am going to fight for her in the open, and you shall have her sister."

"But Lois loved another, and refused my offer of marriage. I do not want an unwilling bride."

"She'll be willing enough now. I'll warrant you her love is the deadest thing you ever heard of by this time. I overheard a conversation between the quadroon and Mrs. Negro Jim to that effect."

Avon looked at him eagerly. "What did you overhear?" he asked.

"I couldn't make it all out; but I know that Lois is thru with Lloyd Charlston forever, and that she is not married to him. You know that Charlston had switched his attentions from Lois to her sister, and they were trying to force her into a marriage with him. But Ila sent a letter to me unknown to her parents, and I came just in time to snatch her from the arms of another enemy of my house. You know how that turned out. The mystery is, who struck that cowardly blow in the dark that frustrated my plans and nearly cost me my life?"

"I have a suspicion that the quadroon could tell us, if she would. She suspects some one—whom, she fails to name—and is anxious for one of us to fight him. She swears she will fight a duel with him herself, if no one else will. Strange girl, that quadroon."

"I am recovered now and at her service. If by paying my own debt I can settle an old score for the girl who has befriended me, I am ready."

"Better turn the case over to me and go home with your bride as soon as the wedding can take place. I promised the quadroon to kill him in her behalf, and I'll do it. I admire that girl; she has sense and grit, and is a friend that will stick, as well as an enemy that never forgives. And she doesn't know the word fear.

"Hastings gave me his word that if I found you he would withdraw his objections to your suit, and I will hold him to it. You are not fit to fight your own battles, tho you are beginning to feel like yourself again. And why should you? All you have to do is to get married and go back to Miles City, and leave me to attend to your affairs, as I have always done."

At that moment the train that was to bear them to within a few miles of Hastings Place pulled into the station, and the two men continued their conversation, but changed the subject. At the other end of their journey they hired a conveyance to take them to the home of the Hastings. The country road was now showing the decay of summer. The bushes along the fences had now and then a scarlet-leaf, presaging a glorious autumn.

The two were silent for the most part during the short drive. At the gates of the grounds the chauffeur was told to wait while they walked up the graveled driveway to the mansion looming imposingly on its eminence at the summit of the several terraces. Not a word was spoken by either as they approached the house. The silence surrounding them seemed oppressive. A precience of the disappointment awaiting them weighed upon the two men. They reached the broad portico and were at the front door, and yet had seen no signs of life anywhere about the place.

"They are gone," said Cecil, in a startled tone. "We are too late!"

With an answering glance of comprehension, Avon lifted the knocker and sent a resounding ring thru the house. There was silence for a few minutes, then a sound of shuffling feet along the hall. An old negress opened the door a few inches and peered out.

"We would like to see Mr. Hastings," Avon said, ingratiatingly. "May we step into the house? He is expecting us, I think."

"'Deed, yo'-all am welcome to come in," replied the negress, "but Marse Hastings or none ob de fambily am home. Dey am gone trabling fo' Miss Ila's health."

"Traveling!" Cecil echoed. "Where have they gone?"

"Doan know, marse. Jest trabling 'round. Me an' my ole man am to take ker o' tings till dey come back. Marse Hastings say he neber want to come back."

"Who is his attorney? He must have left his affairs in the hands of some one."

"Doan know dat, eder."

Cecil turned away. "There is no information to be gained here," he remarked; "let us seek it in the town."

But once there their inquiries brought them no further enlightenment. The lawyer could tell them nothing until he heard from his client. Cecil left his home address and asked to be put in communication with the family as soon as possible. The first train for the West that left the little station had the two men on board.

"Home, first," Cecil said, "and then the moment we get trace of the Hastings family, the struggle to get possession of the two sisters will begin. We will win them now in spite of Fate!"

"We will follow them to the ends of the earth, once we get on their trail," Avon agreed, vehemently.

The men reached home, after a tiresome journey, for tho Cecil's wound was healed, he was still weaker than he cared to own. The ranch-house never looked so good to either of them as it did now, upon their home-coming, after their tragic experiences.

Under the trees in front of the building—trees that it had been necessary to plant there years ago—sat the cowboys smoking their after-dinner pipes. They rose with one accord and cheered, when Cecil and his companion drove up in a livery rig from Miles City.

"Well, if it ain't the boss and his right bower!" exclaimed one, Tom Evers, by name—a great strapping fellow, whose size commanded respect wherever he went. "I'm right glad to see you," he added.

"We're right glad to have you see us," replied Avon, speaking for both.

"We've been wondering if you were ever coming home," put in another. "Avon, here, hasn't kept us as well posted as we would have liked. Just mentioned an accident and left us to guess the rest. Say, you both look good to me!"

They all crowded around, and after shaking hands, followed the newcomers into the house.

"But you didn't keep your promise, boss," still another remarked, "which was to bring home the prettiest girl a man ever laid eyes on, to be mistress of the ranch—the one who was here last summer, you know."

"No," replied Cecil, in a husky voice. "The accident prevented it. And now the bird has flown, I know not whither."

"Never mind," said the new hand, who had been hired in Cecil's absence, evidently thinking it was all a joke, "there's the sweetest, daintiest little fairy over at the adjoining ranch any of you ever saw. She's pretty enough to console a fellow for the loss of a harem full of beauties."

"There are two of them," said Jake Coombs; "I saw them walking out together."

Cecil turned away and went to his own quarters to await the evening meal. His men's thoughtless chatter jarred on his nerves. Being overtired, he threw himself on a couch to rest. Meanwhile Avon went to the spacious kitchen, presided over by a man cook, and got him to fix up a tray of tempting refreshments, which he carried to his friend. Cecil was lying with his hands clasped behind his head, his eyes staring at the ceiling. Placing the tray on a small deal table, which he drew up in front of the couch, Avon said:

"Help yourself to the cook's best coffee. And here are fruit and cake and wine."

Cecil's eyes brightened. "Say, old fellow, you are thoughtful. I feel the need of something in that line; but I hardly realized it till it stared me in the face, thanks to you. Come, help me dispose of it, and save my life. Why, here's provender enough for half a dozen men."

"That's what I figured on," Avon laughed, and drew his chair up to the opposite side of the table.

The room was a cozy one, tho not elaborately furnished. A fireplace, that in winter furnished light and warmth and cheer, was at this season of the year filled with evergreen boughs from the mountains. On the mantel were ornaments whittled from pine by one of the cowboys, and several pipes and a jar of tobacco. A large willow rocker was placed beside the double window. A position by this window commanded a view of the corral. A clump of trees cast a shade upon that side of the house, making the room cool in the hottest weather.

"My, but it seems good to be home," Avon ventured.

"It's different, tho, from what we planned. We expected Ila to be mistress here long before this. I note that the rooms opening off this one are all prepared for her, as I ordered before leaving. The boys all idolized her; and I can see they are somewhat disappointed, tho they try to hide their curiosity."

"Well, the disappointment all around is only temporary, my friend. We have vowed to win out in the end, and we are going to keep that vow. Instead of one bride there'll be two. The place is big enough to build two dwelling-houses, and turn the ranch-house over to the boys."

"You are more sanguine than I am, Avon. The world is wide, and no knowing where Hastings has taken the daughters we covet. He surely has repented of his promise and will keep them away indefinitely. I feel more discouraged than ever, after giving the matter sober reflection."

"You are still weak and tired from your long journey," Avon replied. "You will feel more like yourself after a few days' rest. As for me I am more determined than ever. I feel the fire of battle kindling in my breast. I shall go back and fight that duel in the quadroon's behalf, just to get the desire for action out of my being, if nothing more important turns up."

Cecil, who had resumed his place on the couch, smiled faintly.

"My desire for battle with the dastard who attempted my life is greater than appears on the surface. And after I have found Ila, I shall ferret out his identity and punish him as he deserves. Ila is my greatest concern, to find her my first object. But I despair of ever doing so."

"I don't share your gloom. I have an idea already—that is, a suspicion—which I intend to act upon right after supper. I shall follow up my imaginary clew——"

"A clew already? And since coming here?"

"It may prove to be only a will-o'-the-wisp. I can't tell you what it is, lest I should raise false hopes. But I feel sure we will learn something concerning the Hastings family before long. The girls will not be so easily controlled after this; they are not without spirit, and may take matters in their own hands."

With that Avon withdrew, not waiting for a reply.

In the evening he slipped away unobserved and started for a tramp across the ranch toward Miss Ruth Mainard's, at whose place the Hastings had visited the summer before. It was there he had met Lois, who at that time was enamored of Lloyd Charlston. He had not pressed his suit, after learning the state of her heart. But now—now, if he ever found her it would be different. He would have a fair field and some favor, and he would go in to win. And surely Miss Mainard knew the whereabouts of her brother's family.

Being absorbed in thought he scarcely noticed his surroundings. But upon approaching the boundary of the two ranches he looked up and beheld some one coming toward him. He saw by the moonlight that it was a woman. He paused and waited, and as she came nearer he saw it was a mulatto girl. Here was evidence to confirm the suspicion he had conceived when one of the boys had mentioned seeing two girls out walking. For he recognized Electra, to whom he had intrusted Cecil's note on that fateful night, nearly two months ago. But of course Electra had not been one of the two beauties the cowboy had mentioned.

CHAPTER XX.

LYGIA'S HIDING-PLACE.

NEPHA, the quadroon, stood at a second-story window of Negro Jim's place, gazing out across the back yard, with its patch of late summer flowers, into the forest beyond. She was wondering just what to do next, where to search for Lygia, when a curl of smoke ascending thru the branches of the trees caught her attention.

"Ah," she ejaculated, her spirits rising. She knew instantly that the smoke came from a chimney, and she remembered the uninhabited cabin deeper in the woods that Chloe had spoken of. What was the mystery of the smoke in that direction now? The only thing for her to do was to investigate and find out.

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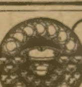

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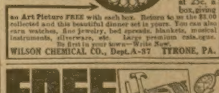

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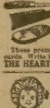

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Hall. She would not dare to trust him there now; there were too many underhanded ways in which his father might work his ruin. Even now he might have both mother and child in his power, and at his mercy.

"He is a greater villain than I thought," she muttered. "But, so help me Heaven! he shall answer to me, if harm ever comes to them thru him. They are all I have in the world—all I have ever really loved!"

She placed her hand in her bosom to see if the pistol she carried was safe, and left the room with one object in view—that of solving the mystery of the curling smoke in the forest. Was Lloyd Charlston hiding there, so near her own retreat, never dreaming of her proximity? She hoped so. She would have him in her power then, and if he had harmed her dear ones she would show him no mercy. Who would ever find his dead carcass in that isolated spot, or suspect her of the crime if he were found there murdered. Only Aunt Anna knew of her just hatred of this man—and she would remain silent.

Of course Lloyd could not know that his temporary habitation was so near the house of her good friends, Negro Jim's family, for there was no road leading to it from the highway.

She was obliged to make her way to the hut thru brambles and over fallen timber; but at last she came within sight of the place. It was a crude log cabin, once occupied by wood-choppers, and had been vacant for years. Boldly Nepha approached the door, ready to beard the lion in his den.

After an interval of dense silence her knock was answered. The door was opened cautiously a few inches. A face appeared in the opening—Lygia's face—inquiring and fearful. She uttered a cry of surprise as she opened the door wide enough for Nepha to enter, bolting it after her. Nepha glanced around her. Little Lloyd sat on the floor, playing with some crude toys that had been whittled out of wood by a man's hand. She caught her breath with a gasp, her anger struggling with her reason for full sway, as she looked to Lygia for an explanation of the situation.

"Oh, Nepha," cried her sister, "don't be hard on me! Remember he is my husband."

"You're a fool, Lygia!" stormed Nepha. "And I am a bigger one to bother with you at all. I ought to leave you to your fate! If I didn't owe that scoundrel something on my own account, I'd do it, too. But I will have my revenge in spite of the fact that the cur has placed you as a shield between himself and harm. Does he think I cannot see thru his scheme to hide behind your skirts? I hold his liberty in my hands, and he thinks I will spare him for your sake. *If he could have removed the evidence against him by doing away with me, he would have sought my life instead of taking you back to his treacherous bosom.* But he knows the evidence, with my affidavit, is in safe hands, and would be made public in case of my untimely demise, and he dare not harm me. That, instead of his affection for you, is why you are where you are today. It was his last resort."

"You misjudge him, sister. He has always loved me, tho he was ashamed to acknowledge me as his wife."

"He will have to prove it now, by taking you home to Charlston Hall and acknowledging both you and the child. I am in a position to enforce my demands, and I will not compromise. Either he will do that or fight a duel with me to see which of us shall longer encumber the earth."

"Nepha, Nepha! You would not do that! You couldn't."

"Couldn't I? I will prove it to you—if he is not too great a coward to fight."

"He would not fight a woman—no man would."

"He would bully a woman."

"He would kill you in a duel, Nepha. You must not think of such a thing."

"I am the better shot."

"You must not kill my boy's father."

"Your son is better off without a father such as Fate has given him. I will, however, take myself out of your affairs as much as can be, and yet settle my own score with my dear half-brother. He does not believe that he is related to me. He detests any one of mixed blood; and if he knew that there was a strain of African blood in you and your child your graves would have been here in the forest in lieu of your living presence. Something would have happened to you both that could not have been traced to his door. It would drive him mad to know that his own child had even a drop of negro blood in his veins. Hatred of our race is almost a mania with him."

"Nepha, you make me afraid! And yet I cannot believe he is as bad as you think. I am not resentful like you, and was willing to forgive him when he asked me to return to him. But do not desert me, sister. I am helpless without you."

"Then let me manage it and I will make him acknowledge you to the world as his wife. I have a Damoclean sword suspended above his head in the form of those proofs, which he knows exists. He will not dare defy me. I will make him take you from this miserable hut to Charlston, where you both belong."

"How can he explain his marriage with Lois Hastings?" asked Lygia.

"He can claim that he believed you dead, and learned his mistake on returning with her to the Hall. That will account for Lois' flight. Of course the public will not swallow all that it is told: no one expects it. Everybody already knows, or believes, that Lloyd Charlston, like his father before him, is the greatest villain unhung. But wickedness, beneath a cloak of respectability, will pass muster when a person has wealth and distinction."

"I will leave everything to you, Nepha," Lygia assented. "You have been my best friend, all the way thru."

And Nepha, after fondling little Lloyd, who put his baby arms about her neck at her request, took her departure from the sparsely furnished hut in the wood. Her eyes were dark with disgust, her lips curled with scorn.

"The coward!" she hissed. "To keep them in a place like that and remain in hiding himself. Villainy free from cowardice might command a measure of respect; for it represents nerve of a certain type. But this sneaky maneuvering is nauseous."

She had not inquired concerning Lloyd's present whereabouts. She did not suppose that Lygia knew, or would betray him, even to her, if she did. While making her way thru the forest she took the revolver from her bosom and kept it in her hand. The possibility of a meeting with Lloyd presented itself. The fox might be returning to his lair. And just as she had prophesied it came to pass. Charlston's path and hers crossed before she got out of the woods and into the clearing belonging to Negro Jim. They came face to face suddenly. Lloyd's hand flew to his hip pocket. But quick as he had been, he found himself looking into the muzzle of Nepha's weapon before he could draw his own.

"Don't do it!" she warned. "Refrain, not for my sake, but for yours."

With an oath he let his hand drop to his side; she did the same, but the revolver was in her hand, her finger still on the trigger.

"I am not ready to die just yet," she said. "I have work to do—wrongs to right and punishment to mete out. However, I wouldn't mind dying to get you hung; and that is what it would mean, as you know. For if anything should happen to me the papers would be read, and Lloyd Charlston, of Charlston Hall, would stand revealed for what he is—assassin, bigamist, and when an investigation of my disappearance was made, my murderer as well. Besides, if anything should happen to Lygia, or the boy, it would be the same. I have insured their safety at your hands. But for the stigma that would rest upon the name of Charlston, and reflect on Lloyd, Jr., I would play into your hands and let you get yourself hung. It would be worth dying for. Shall I fling my weapon into the bushes?"

"No, d—n you!" he hissed, his face distorted with rage. "To find you unarmed would be too much of a temptation. I should shoot you and take the consequences. And for Lygia's sake——"

"Ah, for Lygia's sake!" sneered Nepha. "Since when have you begun to consider Lygia?"

"Since I learned that she is the only thing that stands between me and your hate—your cherished revenge!" he answered defiantly. "So long as I stick by her I am safe from your vengeance, and yet you hate me the more for that. You would like a chance to ruin me, without its affecting her or the boy. But I have you beaten there. I have insured my safety at your hands."

"Have you? Don't be so sure. I could shoot you where you stand without affecting any one, and install your wife and child at the Hall afterward, and no one ever know what became of you. Heavens! It's a temptation."

She raised her arm suddenly, and he staggered back, growing white to the lips.

"In Heaven's name, Nepha, don't shoot!" he cried.

The quadroon pretended to hesitate. "If you loved your wife and child," she said, "I would spare you. But they are better off without you."

"I do!" he cried, earnestly. "Why do you think I married her if it was not for love?"

"Oh, do you?" sneered the quadroon. "Well, if that is love, then right here I register a vow never to wed. But let us make terms: The day that Lygia and her child are installed in your home and openly acknowledged to the public, I will deliver to you the papers which prove your villainy, retaining only the one which directs an investigation to be made in the event that any of us should die under mysterious circumstances. I must reserve that one in self-protection and to protect Lygia and her child. I will give you only two days to make the change from the hut to the mansion."

"You can prove nothing concerning what happened at the Crossroads," he remarked, in an attempt to draw her out. "You do not know where to find Cecil Lynd, or whether he is living or dead."

He had wondered often what had become of the man he had left for dead at the Crossroads. That Avon Walters had spirited him away, so that his having come to the neighborhood might never be revealed, he believed. But whether he was living or dead he had no means of knowing. He was sure, however, that Nepha knew.

But the quadroon did not fall into his trap. She smiled enigmatically. "I can place Lygia in her proper place with or without your help," she said, ignoring his words. "I have other resources. And I would as lief install her at the Hall your widow as your wife. You see I am resourceful. The attack on Cecil is my trump card; but I will not need to play it. That is, if you will fight either myself or the substitute I can furnish."

"Fight—you?"

"Yes; if you are not too big a coward!"

"You little fool!" he exclaimed, his dark face growing disdainful. "You mean a duel, I suppose?"

"I mean a duel. Here and now, if you like. But you dare not do it. You know I am the better shot, and you haven't the nerve."

"I would like to wring your neck; and I have the nerve to do it. But of course I would not stoop to fight a woman."

"Such a lofty height you would need to stoop from!" she flashed, sarcastically. "A man who can bully and insult a woman ought not to be above fighting one. However, I anticipated just such a refusal, and have provided for it. I have engaged a man to meet you in combat."

"A man! Ha, ha! So the quadroon has a lover, after all her vows to remain single."

She stamped her foot in anger, her heel jamming the fallen leaves into the moist earth. "What man would notice the offspring of your father, do you think, since he stooped to make it a—mongrel?"

His brow grew dark. She had purposely angered him to repay him for his taunts.

"Do you think a white man would want to marry me?" she continued. "Would one make love to me? Do you think one would dare? Say, brother, would you mind journeying on to your primeval hut? I am growing tired of your company, but am not foolish enough to turn my back. I don't trust you, somehow."

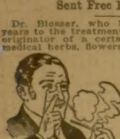
"Curse you!" he ground out. "Under the circumstances I will oblige you."

"Thank you. My substitute will be ready to meet you whenever I am ready for him to do so. He will call you to account, whether you are willing or not. And he will kill you, because your very cowardice will be your undoing. Only a brave man, not a bully, can face possible death with a firm eye and a steady hand."

He did not reply, but strode on thru the timber, leaving her to have the last word, as usual. As soon as he was safely out of sight she made her way back to Negro Jim's, where she rested until morning.

She watched, at intervals, at the window all thru the next day, but no smoke from the direction of the hut greeted her vision. She drew her own conclusions and smiled triumphantly.

(Concluded Next Week.)



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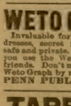

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THE IMPOSTOR.

"Oh, mamma! such a poor, meanly dressed old man is asking to see you," cried Kate Hillsborough, coming into her mother's richly decorated morning-room. "He seems quite importunate, too, tho I told him you were engaged."

"Indeed," added Laura, the elder sister, who, attended by a gentleman, had just returned from the morning service, "we want no poor old men here!"

"He acted so strangely, too," continued Kate; "while speaking to me he was gazing round at the portraits on the walls."

"How vastly annoying!" murmured their mother.

"Perhaps, Mrs. Hillsborough, it is some poor fellow in want of a trifle to assist him on his way," suggested Doctor Gray, Laura's escort. "If so, I will attend to him," and the Doctor drew out his purse as he spoke. But the importunate stranger had followed Kate, and was even then within the room.

"Have you quite forgotten me, Maria?" he asked, his voice trembling with emotion.

"You must be mistaken; I never saw you before, and consider your presence here an unwarrantable intrusion."

"I know—I know—years, and hard toil, and loneliness have left their traces upon me, but I had hoped a brother might be recognized thru all."

"If you do not instantly depart I shall ring the bell and order you to be thrust from the door."

Doctor Gray advanced to the side of the affrighted lady, who had become white as her elegant morning wrapper; but he closed his purse; there was a dignity in the stranger's mien which forbade the offering of alms.

"Would it not be better, sir," he asked, addressing the intruder, tho his tone conveyed no disrespect, "if you retire a while? Mrs. Hillsborough appears startled by your sudden presence."

But ere he could receive an answer, two others hurriedly entered the room, a young man and a fair, lovely girl.

"What is the matter, Aunt Maria?" cried the former; but the old man, gazing upon the girl, and with a cry as from the depths of an agonized heart, exclaimed wildly:

"My God! hast Thou permitted me to look upon her once more ere we meet within Thy kingdom?"

"You can all see," said Mrs. Hillsborough, "this is some escaped lunatic! Harry, instantly send a messenger to communicate with the police!"

"Pray, pray, be gentle with him!" pleaded the young girl.

"Oh, my sainted Marguerite; that was once your voice!"

"Who are you, sir,?" she asked, "for Marguerite was my mother's name. Did you ever know her?"

"Yes, young lady, twenty-five years ago; and for her sake I, Martin Lansdowne, left home and friends, and wandered away to the lone wilderness of the far West."

"Oh, Harry!" she cried, "this must be our father's long-lost brother whom he has so often named to us. Aunt, do you not see the resemblance to my father?"

"No, I see nothing of the kind; he is some worthless tramp and impostor. We heard that our brother was dead, and such I believe is the truth. Harry, again I request you to order this man's expulsion from my house."

"And cousin, pray, don't you interfere," said Laura Hillsborough, as Marguerite stretched forth her hands, appealingly. "Mamma must know better than you."

"Laura, I have come from hearing the good words of peace and love and charity; and upon this day, so sacred to our hearths and homes, my father's brother, for it may be he, shall not be without a shelter."

"You are right, sister," said Harry. "Come, sir, you shall go with us; our home is a farmhouse, a few miles distant, and the wagon is awaiting us at Aunt Hillsborough's door, for we merely called here on our way from church."

"I thank you both, and long to look upon my brother's face, for I have no longer a sister."

"Maggie is such a romantic, impulsive little simpleton, Doctor Gray," exclaimed Laura, as the old man left the room with her two cousins.

"I admire that impulsiveness, Miss Hillsborough."

The fascinations of the brilliant and dashing Laura had vanished, and from that time Sydney Gray only beheld a cold and heartless girl, while the sweet, pitying tones of Marguerite lingered with him all thru that day.

The drive in the cool, fresh air, and the relief from the sensation of utter loneliness had brought a color to the wanderer's pallid cheek and a fire to his saddened eyes, and he stood at Arnold Lansdowne's gate more like the man who years before had cast away all family ties than when craving Mrs. Hillsborough's recognition; but there, he refused to cross the threshold until summoned.

"Not again," said he, "not again will I enter unbidden—if my brother does not come forth to greet me I will depart and die, as I have lived, alone!"

We must return to Mrs. Hillsborough's, where numerous guests had arrived to partake of the usual Thanksgiving day good cheer which loaded her tables; but a shadow and a gloom had fallen over all, for many-voiced rumor circulated the story that the brother of that lady had appeared most unexpectedly, footsore and weary from long travel, and clothed in patched garments, and that he had been ignominiously driven from the house. Many were the versions of the story; but if ever skeleton sat at festive board, surely one there occupied a seat; for the sister of that old man felt convicted of falsehood and unkindness and wrongdoing.

How Sydney Gray blessed his profession, which gave him the excuse to leave early, and how he wondered what reception had been accorded to the old traveler. "But I cannot call there this evening," was his regretful thought, "for delicacy would forbid an intrusion."

Fortune, however, favored the young doctor, for on his homeward ride he met a boy, sent by Harry Lansdowne, requesting his immediate attendance, as one of the farmhands had been kicked by a horse and seriously injured.

Upon the doctor's arrival the wounded man was attended to, made comparatively easy, and left to rest in his own cottage. Then Arnold Lansdowne invited Sydney to join their small party—no strangers were present, for since the death of his fondly loved wife, Arnold saw but little society—but there sat the wayworn pilgrim, an honored guest.

Martin rose and extended his hand, saying:

"This gentleman was my best friend, for I read sympathy in his countenance; but, ah, poor Maria! how worldly she has become."

"Mr. Lansdowne," answered Sydney, "excuse my remark, but I, knowing the genial character of your brother am surprised that you did not first seek him."

"There was a reason, Doctor, which a few words will explain. Yes, I must tell you, for I admit the sudden appearance of this dear girl caused me to forget the lapse of time, and almost warranted my sister's reproachful term, 'an escaped lunatic.' Marguerite is the very counterpart of her mother at that age, and she, Doctor, was the only girl I ever loved or sought to win. Arnold and I were rivals—he obtained the prize, and we parted—upon my side, with bitter feelings of jealousy and wrath; and, as I then believed, proud triumph upon his. I could not enter his house unasked, but her death has broken down the barrier; all pride and bitterness are buried in her grave, and this angel child, who so nobly took the part of the despised old man, has united us. I had waited all of yesterday at a little wayside hut, thinking, surely, at the blessed Thanksgiving time, even the hardest heart might be softened. I have done, brother"—for Arnold had endeavored to stay the recital—"it is all over now, and I hope God will accept my thanks for the home you so freely offer, and which I so gratefully accept."

"Uncle Martin," said Marguerite, "I forbid another word upon this subject; you have already suffered much excitement and will make yourself seriously ill."

"Never mind, my dear, Doctor Gray will give me the benefit of his professional skill, and I know there is one kind nurse at hand."

It was too bad of Uncle Martin to raise that bright blush upon his niece's cheek by thus coupling their names together, and if the old hermit, as he called himself, had lived companionless in caves for many a year, how did he acquire such an insight into the human heart; or, indeed, very much other and varied information?—for as the time passed on, he proved an invaluable counselor in the many matters connected with his brother's land. Doctor Gray appeared to take the greatest pleasure in Uncle Martin's society, for he became a constant visitor, tho, perhaps, the sweet, shy eyes of Marguerite were the true loadstar.

We must not omit to state that the old man received a small quantity of homely-looking baggage, which would have intensely disgusted Laura and Kate Hillsborough; then he laid aside his traveling suit, as he called the much worn and patched garments, and dressed like a plain country gentleman, admitted being in possession of a trifling income, which, as he had no board to pay sufficed to provide tobacco and the other simple needs of a backwoodsman.

Doctor Gray's business greatly increased; an old practitioner having died, he became the only physician of that neighborhood. After some time he rented a pretty house—one side, only a little removed from the village street, being devoted to business; the other and dwelling part, opening into a large pleasure garden, and commanding an uninterrupted view of the picturesque country. And Marguerite had assisted at the selection of their future home, for she was then the promised wife of Sydney Gray.

They were married one day in the early springtime, and before the happy pair started on their brief bridal tour—what happened? Uncle Martin presented them with the deeds of that very house and adjoining land, a huge chest of massive silver articles, many of them, which, as the eldest of that family, had fallen to him years before, laid away, none knew where, and bequeathed by a will to his unforgotten Marguerite's children. In addition to these was also a check for a goodly amount—some being left, too, for Harry when his turn came.

The old backwoodsman proved immensely wealthy. During those twenty-five years he had owned acres and acres of Western lands, ranches of cattle, and well-stocked farms; but at length, tired of solitude, had sold them and turned his face homeward, to seek out, as he stated, the most worthy.

So he was something of an impostor after all. But, ah! had he approached his sister's door "clad in purple and fine linen," how different would have been her reception! And did she and her daughters ever forgive themselves for their unkind treatment of Uncle Martin upon the morning of that eventful Thanksgiving day, when, in the guise of poverty, travel-stained, worn and weary, he had been refused a shelter beneath their roof?

HIS FRIEND HURT;
HE HELPED HIM

Injured Man Laughed When Simple Treatment Was Suggested, But He Thanked His Comrade Later.

Once upon a time word came to Henry A. Voehl, of Plainfield, N. J., that a close friend had been injured, and full of anxiety he visited the afflicted man, who was suffering from a sprained ankle.

"It was so bad that the leg had turned black," said Mr. Voehl in relating the story. "I told him I would have him out in a week and he laughed at me. But I took him a bottle of Sloan's Liniment, that night he put some on and noticed the ankle felt better. I told him to use it every day, and in three days his ankle was practically well. In four days he was working. He gladly admits that Sloan's Liniment 'put him on his feet.'"

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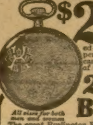

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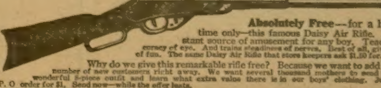

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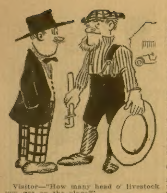


Visitor—"How many head o' livestock you got on the place?"

Farmer (somewhat troubled)—"Livestock? What do you mean by livestock? I got four steam tractors and seven automobiles."

Lacking in Tact.

Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, the famous suffragette, speaking of a recent untactful motion at a woman's club, said it reminded her, in its delicacy, of the story of a Ripon man.

"This man got married, and after several years had elapsed his wife said to him one night: 'John, you do not speak as affectionately to me as you used to when we were first married. I fear you have ceased to love me.'

"'Ceased to love you!' growled the man. 'There you go again. Why, I love you more than life itself. Now shut up and let me read the paper.'"

Sally Never Strayed.

A woman appeared at the office of the claim agent of a Western railroad. "Yo' steam cars is done kilt my mule Sally," she announced, in a decidedly tragic manner.

"Well, madam," replied the agent, "if it was the fault of the company you will be recompensed, you may be sure. What were the circumstances and what was the mule worth?"

"Sally was the best mule Ah ever seed," said the woman, as she wiped her wet eyes with her bonnet string. "Ah done plowed with that mule fer goin' on nine years, an' thar' warn't nothin' the matter with her, 'ceptin' she was a little mite lame in her nigh hind laig an' kinder blind in one eye. Ah give $40 an' three bed quilts an' two pecks of dried pears fer her, and she was as good as the day Ah got her."

"Where was the mule killed?" the agent asked.

"Hit war at the crossin' an' you' fast mail train jest knocked her plumb over thet fence an' inter a gully!" was the woman's reply.

"And the mule strayed upon the track, I presume?" queried the agent.

The woman gave him an indignant look.

"Oh, no!" she declared. "Sally never would 'a' been fool enough to walk in front of no train—my old man was ridin' her!"

Going It Alone.

Karl Wellman pitches for one of the St. Louis teams in the big leagues. As might be guessed from his name, he is German.

"Say," demanded an opposing batsman one day in the spring, "why don't you go back to Germany and fight for the Fatherland?"

"Who, me?" demanded Karl. "Did the Kaiser send anything over here to help me last fall when I was pitching in all those tough double-headers?"

He'd Teach Him.

John Stampa was certainly a man who stood on his dignity and when he was made postmaster for the village there was no holding him. As the landlord of the one hotel said he went right up in the air.

One morning Mike Howe, a newcomer, who had bought a small farm in the village, wandered into the postoffice.

"Have yez any letters fer Mike Howe?"

The new official glared and went on reading the messages on other people's postcards.

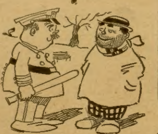
"I want any letters for Mike Howe!" repeated the farmer.

The postmaster slipped somebody's newspaper out of its wrapper, and began reading it.

"Hi, you! Is there any letters for Mike Howe?"

Then the representative of the Government came from behind the counter with a black ruler, and with three swift blows on the head stretched Mike Howe unconscious on the floor.

"I'll teach him," he muttered, as he returned to his newspaper—"I'll teach him to come here and try to pull my leg! Asking for letters for his cow!"



"Ain't you the guy I pinched about six weeks ago after I chased you three blocks? What did I arrest you for, anyhow?"

"For exceeding the speed limit, I guess."

Worried to Death.

Justice John W. Goff, who presided at the Becker trial with its famous exposures of the New York police graft, in reminiscent mood not long ago, related a story about an old negro who once went to a judge and said:

"Jedge, I want to get a divorce."

"What's the matter with you and Aunt Dinah?" asked the judge.

"That woman just worries me to death," replied the negro. "One day she axes me for a dollar an' the nex' day for another dollar, and she just worries me to death all the time."

"Well, what does Aunt Dinah do with all the money?" queried the judge.

"I dunno," responded old Jim, meditating. "I ain't done never give her none yet."

Ought to Be One.

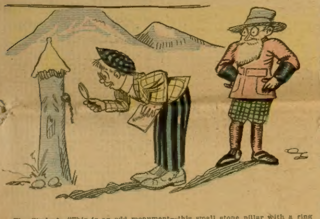
The clergyman of a country village, reprehending one of his parishioners for quarreling with his wife so loudly and frequently as to be a source of perpetual disturbance to the neighborhood, in the course of his exhortation remarked that the Scriptures declared that man and wife were one.

"Aye, that may be, sir," answered Hodge, "but if you were to go by when me and my wife are at it you'd think there were twenty of us."

A Big Item.

"Can two live as cheaply as one?"

"Well, another passenger adds nothing to the upkeep of a motor car."



The Student—"This is an odd monument—this small stone pillar with a ring in it. I wonder what it was designed to commemorate."

The Archaeologist—"That was not a monument. That was a hitching post in use during the horse age."

The Mistaken City Girl.

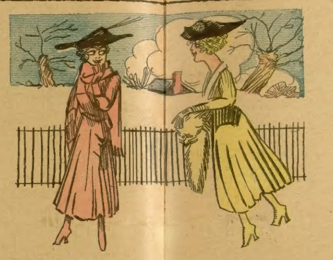
A city girl was visiting in the country. She came to a pond whose shallows were full of tadpoles—thousands and thousands of little black tadpoles flopping about in an inch of mud and water.

"Oh," she said, "look at the tadpoles! And to think that some day every one of the horrid, wriggling things will be a beautiful butterfly!"

Inadequate.

"Your case would have been stronger, Mr. McGuire," said a lawyer, "if you had acted only on the defensive. But you struck first. If you had let him strike you first you would have had the law on your side."

"Yes," said McGuire, "Oi'd have had the law on my soide, but Oi'd have had him on me stomach, pounding the loife out av me."



Kitty—"Where are you going in such a hurry?"

Dolly—"I'm going to congratulate Bess Sour. Just heard she is engaged to Billy Swift."

Kitty—"But what's your rush?"

Dolly—"Goodness, how can I congratulate her if I don't get there before the engagement's broken?"

He Really Fell.

A slippery road, a bicycle and an elderly gentleman. Such a combination is full of possibilities, and when to these is added a playful puppy excitement is apt to grow intense.

On the occasion under notice the puppy evidently mistook the bicycle tires for his own elusive tail. He scampered around it for awhile, with the consequence that the elderly gentleman found that he was detached from his bicycle, and that he was saluting the road in the amiable fashion of the far Northern country, where they rub noses. He was not delighted with the situation, but the dog evidently was, for he frisked around and barked joyously.

"Did you fall, mister?" inquired the butcher's boy, who had viewed the performance.

"Of course I did," said the elderly gentleman, with some show of anger.

"Ah," said the philosopher and friend of the man of meat. "I thought you wouldn't have got down there just to play with the dog!"

Pat Was Frightened.

Pat O'Hoolan's principal failing was a liking for whisky, and numerous efforts had been made to reform him. One day the local priest decided to frighten him into the ranks of teetotalers.

"Patrick," he said sternly, "I warn you that the next glass of whisky you drink will at once transform you from a man into a mouse!"

"Do yes mane to say, yer riverence," asked Pat, in horror, "that Oi will change into a mouse if Oi drink any more whisky?"

"You will!" cried the priest, hiding a smile.

Pat at once put on his hat and coat.

"Ah!" exclaimed the reverend gentleman. "Going to sign the pledge, eh?"

"No, sorr," replied Pat; "Oi'm going to drown the cat!"

Difficult.

"This motion picture comedian has to work hard."

"Why, it isn't such hard work to fall into mud puddles, have pies smeared on your face, be run over by a street sweeper and receive the contents of a flour barrel on your head."

"I know it, but think how much trouble it must be for him to get cleaned up every evening in time for dinner."

Why She Knew.

"Do you know what time your sister's young man left last night?"

"I think it was about one, dad, because when he was going I heard him say: 'Just one! Only one!'"

Cheaper.

"Given up the idea of moving, old man?"

"Yes; we've changed the furniture around and imagine we're living in a new house."

ENCHANTMENT.

I catch the spicy odors now of Araby the blest,
They conjure up fond visions of the highest and the best,
And life takes on new meaning and endeavor takes on zest,
And all the world is lovely and bewitchin'.
I smell the perfumed zephyrs of many a tropic clime,
I turn my back on reason and my heart is moved to rhyme;
Ah, let me strike the lyre now and sing of this grand time—
For ma is makin' pickles in the kitchen!

Ominous.

A New England man tells of a man in Westfield, Mass., who had been married four times and been so unfortunate as to lose all his wives. Such a matter of course had this man's weddings come to be in Westfield that when, after a year of widowerhood, he announced his fifth engagement, one of the neighbors said:

"Richard, I suppose getting married comes pretty natural to you by this time, doesn't it?"

"Well," said Richard, after due reflection, "this fifth marriage ain't going to seem so natural. Old Parson Begg's off on a trip to Europe, and he's never failed to tie the knot for me.

"I said to Mary that I didn't think it would feel like a wedding without Parson Begg; but she said that it was her turn to choose, and that she meant to start out with that young minister that just came to town, and that if he did well she guessed she'd stick to him. She didn't explain what she meant, but it sounded kinder ominous to me."

A Long Time.

"How long have you been a smoker?"

"Ever since the days there were barns for naughty small boys to hide behind."

Hard to Beat the Irish.

A leading railroad lawyer, who has had much to do with human nature, says: "Never cross-question an Irishman from the old sod." And he gave an illustration from his own experience.

A section hand had been killed by an express train and his widow was suing for damages. The main witness swore positively that the locomotive whistle had not sounded until after the whole train had passed over his departed friend.

"See here, McGinnis," said I, "you admit that the whistle blew?"

"Yis, sor, it blew, sor."

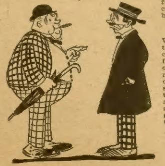
"Now, if that whistle sounded in time to give Michael warning, the fact would be in favor of the company, wouldn't it?"

"Yis, sor, and Mike would be tistifyin' here this day." The jury giggled.

"Very well. Now what earthly purpose could there be for the engineer to blow his whistle after Mike had been struck?"

"I preshume thot the whistle wor for the next man on the track, sor."

I quit, and the widow got all she asked.



Greene—"Yes, I had a balance in the bank, but I became engaged two months ago and now——"

Browne—"Ah, love makes the world go round."

Greene—"You're right there. It made me go round so fast that I lost my balance."

A Wise Child.

School children know a great deal more than they used to do. In fact, some of them, in their own opinions at least, are quite capable of tutoring their tutors.

"Those kiddies I teach are as knowing as an encyclopedia," said a teacher recently."

"In what way?" asked his friend.

"Well," replied the scholastic person, "the other day I set a problem in arithmetic: 'A rich man dies and leaves a million pounds. One-fifth is to go to the wife, one-fifth to his son, one-eighth to his brother and the rest to the hospitals. What does each one get?'"

"Yes?" queried the friend, not very interested.

"Back came the reply from the smallest boy in the class: 'A lawyer, sir.'"

Accounted For.

An Irishman with a very thick head of hair was one day the center of a ring of English farmers who were endeavoring to crack jokes at his expense.

"Why," exclaimed one of them, "you've got a head of hair like a stack of hay."

"Ah," returned Pat, unruffled, "that's just what I was thinking; that accounts for so many asses around me."

Reasons for Success.

Beguiled by the attractive wording of an advertisement appearing in a trade paper, a trusting investor from the North bought a sawmill in the White River bottoms of Arkansas. When he went down to take over his newly purchased property and to assume its management the recent owner met him at the railroad station and bade him welcome.

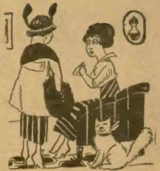
As they climbed into the native's buggy to drive thru the woods to the spot where the plant was located, the stranger said:

"I wish you'd give me a few hints right off about how to run this business profitably. You see, I'm a little bit green at this line. I've been a lumber dealer all my life, but I never undertook to handle the raw material before."

"Well, mister," stated the Arkansan, frankly, "I wish I could give you the advice you want, but I reckon I jest don't know myself. My father-in-law died and left me this here mill in his will. My two boys helped me to run her and there wasn't no other hands, and so I never had to pay out nothin' for wages. I stole all the timber I cut, and my stepbrother, who's the division freight agent for the railroad, used to slip all my lumber out for me so I never had to pay no freight charges—and last year I come out $2,700 behind."

Getting Along Finely.

Col. E. M. House said at a dinner in Washington not long ago: "I sometimes think that diplomacy would be more successful if it were more truthful and frank. The way some diplomats treat one another they don't get any nearer to real, helpful intercourse than the two celebrities did. Two celebrities, one a stutterer and the other deaf, were introduced at a tea. After the tea the stuttering celebrity was asked how he and the deaf one had got on. 'Oh, we got on fine,' he answered. 'I couldn't talk and he couldn't hear me.'"



Ethel—"Cheer up, Bess; after the clouds the sunshine!"

Bess (sobbing afresh)—"Yes, but I freckle awfully!"

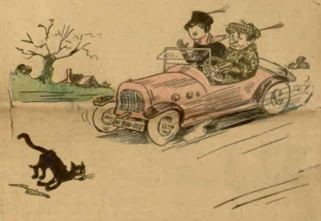
Feared a Repetition.

A clergyman was once annoyed by people talking and giggling during the service. He paused, looked at the disturbers, and said: "Some years since, as I was preaching, a young man who sat before me was constantly laughing, talking and making uncouth grimaces. I paused and administered a severe rebuke. After the close of the services a gentleman said to me:

"'Sir, you made a great mistake; that young man is an idiot.'

"Since then I have always been afraid to reprove those who misbehaved in chapel lest I should repeat that mistake and reprove another idiot."

During the rest of the services there was good order.



Mrs. Speedup—"There's a black cat crossing the road right in front of our car. Do you believe it's a sign of bad luck for a black cat to cross your path?"

Mr. Speedup—"Sure. If she doesn't beat it in a hurry it'll be mighty bad luck for the cat."

Took the Hint.

"I like to clean up my work quickly."

"I find it advisable to string it out a little so that I will always have something on my desk in case a bore comes in," said his friend, taking up some papers.

Then the other looked at him queerly and went out.

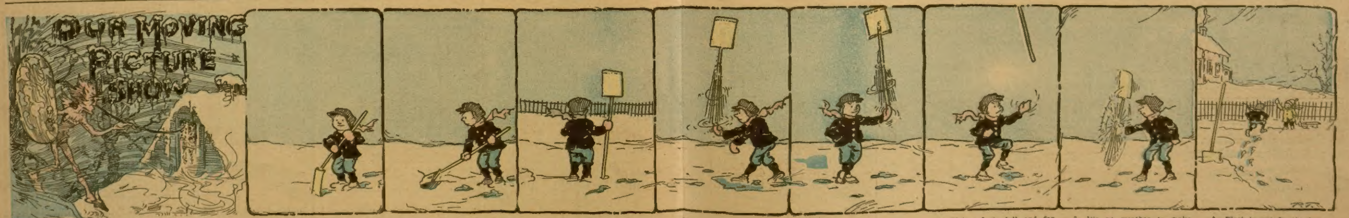
An Awful Suspicion.

The young woman in the stern of the little boat had whispered "Yes."

"But stay where you are, Jack," she added hastily. "If you try to kiss me you'll upset the boat."

"How do you know?" hoarsely demanded Jack, a horrible suspicion already taking possession of him.

A BOY SHOVELING OFF A WALK



1. Boy all ready for the fray.
2. Good beginning—in its way.
3. Pause for breath makes slight delay.
4. Now, all work and little play—
5. That's what many people say—
6. Makes Jack dull and far from gay.
7. It's no weather to make hay.
8. Work is over for the day.

An Island Vendetta

Or, Sea Prisoners

By Willard E. Hawkins

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CHAPTER XIX

LOST IN THE LABYRINTH.

IF IT had been a steel vise gripping him with inexorable clutch, Matt could not have been more rigidly held. For a moment he almost tottered, for the sudden dissipation of his coiled-up energy left him weak and shaken.

The two figures hurtled onward and disappeared, while Matt slowly turned, endeavoring to pierce the darkness with his gaze.

"Speak!" he whispered hoarsely. "Are you woman or ghost? My God! It isn't—it can't be——"

The hand clutched his arm convulsively. One of the other actors in the midnight drama was returning. The stride was too heavy to have been made by the boy, from which it seemed evident that Reuel had eluded his pursuer.

As if she instinctively guessed the oncomer's purpose, Matt's companion drew him still deeper within the cavern, which seemed to extend far into the rock. A moment later the entrance was blocked by a great black form, which hesitated, then, with arms outstretched for guidance, slowly made its way forward.

Meanwhile, in obedience to the soft pressure on his arm, Matt was cautiously retreating. The noise they made in drawing back was more than covered by the shuffling tread of the approaching figure.

Once, the latter paused and lighted a match, at which they crouched against the wall. The feeble radiance revealed the sinister, florid countenance of Reuel Vogt with its matted, brick-red hair, and cast faint shadows on the walls and ceiling of the cavern.

[illegible] to spring, if they were discovered, but the match sputtered out and there was no threatening movement. All desire, all motive to spring upon his enemy had vanished from the thoughts of Matt Bellamy. A great peace had settled upon him. He would have trustingly followed that warm female presence into the depths of a volcano.

Presently the other man stopped to light another match. The cavern appeared limitless. Evidently he came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be gained by going farther, for he turned and commenced to retrace his way. They waited until his footsteps became scarcely audible, then Matt drew the girl to him until she lay throbbing in his arms.

"Ruth!" he whispered tenderly. "You gave me an awful scare."

To his utter amazement she burst out sobbing.

"I treated you—abominably," she articulated between sobs. "And now—it—it has all come to nothing."

"Not by a long sight, it hasn't!" responded Bellamy, emphasizing by an increased pressure of his arms.

At that she disengaged herself and remarked that they had better make toward the light. So, hand in hand, they walked slowly forward.

The distance surprised Matt. Presently it alarmed him. It did not seem possible that their slow retreat had brought them so far into the depths. And within a few minutes the truth was not to be denied. They had taken the wrong turning.

"There's nothing for it," said Matt, cheerfully, "but to go back. If we can find the place where we stopped, it will be easy enough to make a new start.'

Vain suggestion! for they had no way of knowing when they came to the place where she had wept on his shoulder, and each turn they took in the Stygian darkness was as likely to lead deeper into the labyrinth as toward the open.

The first apprehension gave way to blank despair. Tho Bellamy threw all the confidence he could into the tone with which he uttered words of reassurance, he had commenced to feel that there existed only a bare chance that they would again see the light.

They must have wandered for more than two hours, when the girl declared that she could not move another step. Bellamy half led, half carried his charge, until he reached a comparatively dry place. Then he sank down on the uneven floor and gathered her in his arms.

There was that in the manner of the girl which made Bellamy feel that she would have been content to lie enfolded in his arms even had the circumstances been different. It was love without the preliminary love-making; understanding without confession.

Something, indeed, she did tell him of the sudden realization that had come over her, that day, of the place he had grown to occupy in her life. And the sweetness of the awakening meant so much to both of them that for the moment they forgot their frightful predicament.

"And yet," said Matt, after she had related all that had transpired since his discovery of the letter, "you tried to blight my whole existence by leaving that terrible note this morning. Ruth, dear, you will never realize how near that came to making me want to follow you out of the world."

"Oh, yes, I can!" she answered quickly. "The knowledge has been coming—ever since."

"When I think of you unprotected out in the storm," he said, "I am filled with reverence for your spirit and with fury at your inhumanity to yourself. And it was all so unnecessary."

"There I can't agree with you. I had my secret to keep—the secret of my brother's terrible misfortune. And if I had gone away from the island, what would have become of him? Can you conceive of anything more horrible than to be entirely isolated here? He is my brother; it is my duty to make his exile endurable. And I guessed enough of how you felt," she added shyly, "to know that the only way to gain my object would be to make you think I had ceased to exist."

"Which brings us to the question," said Bellamy: "If Reuel Vogt had that letter in his possession, how does it come that you could make use of it?"

"He did not have it in his possession."

"Then how——?"

"If you will recall that time when you broke in on our conversation, you must remember that just before I went into the cottage he forced some papers upon me. They included the letter and the paper I had signed."

"But you had been refusing them."

"Yes. I placed a foolish interpretation upon his act at the time. I thought he had decided to betray my brother."

"And what else could have been his reason?"

"I leave you to guess," she replied. "Do you know, Matt, you are terribly quick to attribute evil motives to your brother? You told me yourself that he has always been a sort of under dog in the fight. Who can blame him for not inevitably doing the right thing? Training—or lack of it—counts for something, you know. He is hot-tempered and impulsive like yourself. And some of his impulses are good ones."

"Do you mean," said Matt, slowly, "that he gave you back the papers because he did not want to take advantage of your helplessness? Perhaps it was something even deeper that that——?"

She was silent.

"Well," he admitted, after a moment, "this puts matters in a different light."

"Dear," she murmured, "I have the right to say to you some things that I could not have said before. When I touched your arm a short time ago, you were hunting him down as if he had been a wild beast—so quick were you to think the worst of him. Remember, he once saved my life. And I can conceive of no reason why he is hiding from the people of the ship other than his desire to discover what became of me. I can't help pitying Reuel—and liking him just a little bit."

"Then," said Bellamy, simply, "I have been mistaken. There must be good in him."

"If ever," she began hesitatingly—"if we ever reach the outer world, will you do your part toward——?"

"You may count on me," he assured her simply. "The injuries Reuel has done me I can freely forgive. No doubt every one of them is offset by an equal injury on my part."

"But oh, my dear girl," he exclaimed a moment later, "what a lot of trouble you would have saved by confiding in me!"

"It would have been a relief," she admitted; "but the secret belonged to my brother. If we ever get out of this cave, we still have his problem to face."

"And the way we'll face it," he said gruffly, "is to get on that vessel—all of us—and sail back to New York."

"No! no!" she cried vehemently. "What are you thinking of? How can you think of such a thing, when in the eyes of the law my brother is—a murderer?"

"No more so than you or I," said Bellamy.

She drew away from him in astonishment.

"It all came back to me," he continued, "a few days after my arrival, but the subject seemed so painful to you that after one or two attempts I did not bring it up. You may recall that when you first mentioned it, I thought the name, Froelich, seemed familiar. Shortly before leaving the continent I read in the latest New York papers that reached us some particulars of Froelich's accident. It was stated that he had been found lying on the floor in his luxurious apartment, stunned as a result of a fall against a table leg. Was your Mr. Froelich subject to epileptic seizures?"

"He may have been," she replied breathlessly. "I never knew certainly; but it was rumored. Go on! The rest?"

"The newspaper said that he was subject to sudden attacks of this kind, and it was understood that he fell in one of these and so struck the piece of furniture. He was taken to the hospital in a very precarious condition. Nothing was said about a bullet wound."

She dropped her head to his shoulder, sobbing in a paroxysm of relief and joy.

"What a horrible nightmare it has all been!" she exclaimed.

"For my part," said Matt, "I haven't the slightest doubt now that Froelich pulled thru, and that he is the sick man the sailors mentioned as owner of the yacht."

She nestled to him and closed her eyes in perfect contentment. They had no means of knowing whether their wandering had extended into the day, or whether it was still night in the world overhead—the world which they stood a very strong chance of never again seeing. But they slept as peacefully as if their whole future had been mapped out in perfect security.

CHAPTER XX.

A RAY OF LIGHT.

MATT had fallen asleep facing the grim certainty of a morrow filled with desperate possibilities. He had before him an arduous search—a search in the dark for a way out of the labyrinthian maze in which they were entangled. At every moment, instead of making toward the light, they might be burying themselves deeper, until exhaustion ended the effort and starvation came with its horrors.

So it was with full conviction that he must be dreaming that he opened his eyes and found himself staring at a single bright sunbeam which fell across the ankles of his precious charge.

"We're saved!" cried Matt, exultingly.

His start of amazement woke the girl. Both forgot the stiffness of their limbs and their chilled, hungry bodies. They sprang up with the eagerness of children to study out the source of the sunbeam.

It entered from a small, shaft-like opening far overhead, and at first did not appear to offer a very difficult problem to reach. But when Matt had essayed a few times to clamber up, and found himself unable to gain a foothold, he commenced to realize that their difficulties were by no means ended.

Slowly and methodically he set to work to chip a series of hand and foot holds in the surface of the wall which led up to the shaft. Nature aided him unexpectedly, for the rock was crumbly in strata, and near the top was rough enough to serve as a good clinging surface. After a number of attempts, he at length succeeded in reaching the chimney-like exit. [illegible]

"Stay where you are, [illegible] down, "and I'll come back with [illegible] or something, to help you up."

He could hear her efforts to scale the wall as he had done, and again called a warning: "It's a tough climb. Better wait until I come back."

With a final word of reassurance, he wriggled to the surface. He was surprised to find the exit located near the base of the hill, only a few hundred yards from the marshy shore. The pole he desired could be secured near at hand, amid the thick foliage of the water side.

Intent upon the work of hacking at a long sapling with his knife, he did not observe the figure that emerged from the rocks not far from where he had pushed thru the earth.

His first intimation of the other presence was the sudden grip of muscular arms which clamped his elbows tightly to his body. The next instant he fell violently on the soft turf.

"What the——!"

He struggled frantically; but the other man had been skilful enough to grasp him with a hold that would have baffled a practiced wrestler. Shifting his knees to prevent the moving of his victim's arms, the attacker slipped a coarse handkerchief around Matt's head and tied it dexterously into a gag.

"That'll keep you quiet," he remarked coolly.

Bellamy heaved and tossed. Suddenly he gave a quick turn and succeeded in whirling on his back. The situation was far from bettered; but he could look into the vindictive eyes of Reuel Vogt and return the glare with emphasis.

"Got you where you belong, at last!" said Reuel, bitterly. "I've been waiting for a chance like this, to get you away from that little fool you've been poisoning against me with your dirty slanders.

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I ain't goin' to hurt him, but you'll get all that's coming to you."

An inarticulate sound came from Matt's throat.

"You dum fool!" blazed Reuel. "What's your idea, hunting a man down as if he was a skunk that hadn't a right to live on the same island with you? D'ye think I made away with the girl? Well, I didn't. I don't know any more where she is than you do."

He paused for a moment, gazing at the facial contortions made by Matt in his effort to speak.

"No, you don't! I ain't goin' to have you calling for help. There's a few scores to settle between you and me, before any third parties enters into this game. Remember I said once I'd give you what was coming to you some day? Well, this is the day. But if you'd let me alone as I was willing to let you alone, it would never 'a' come. I let you go mooning around the island with her, [illegible] I could have put a hole thru you [illegible] th this little thing——"

He [illegible] ne hand cautiously and reached [illegible] hip pocket for the revolver.

"Fool that I was," he continued bitterly, "to let a woman get the best of my common sense!"

Bellamy was lying quiet. His eyes were fixed covetously upon the revolver.

How he accomplished it, he could not have described. With a quick access of energy, he doubled up like a suddenly released spring. Reuel, taken off his guard, lost his knee hold. In an instant both men were on their feet, battling furiously for the weapon.

Bellamy had succeeded in grasping Reuel firmly by both wrists. Twist as he would, the latter could not free his arms, neither could he turn the revolver far enough down to take an effective shot.

Still rendered dumb by the gag, Bellamy had no choice but to fight the battle to its bitter conclusion. He felt his opponent weakening. Undoubtedly Reuel had been on the move all night, while he himself had awakened only a few moments before from a refreshing sleep. The other must have felt that he was being worsted; for he glanced around apprehensively, his sharp eyes noting every detail of the surroundings.

With a sudden twist of the revolver wrist, he sent the weapon flying. It crashed thru the foliage, landing with a thud on the far side of the saplings.

Drawing apart as if by consent, both men started toward the grove. At the outskirts, Reuel hung back, allowing his companion to dash ahead. An instant later, as Matt bent over to grasp the revolver, he was violently propelled by a sudden shove from the rear.

The weapon was flung in advance of him as he stumbled forward. Before he could recover, a second shove sent him flying as from a catapult. He landed on all fours, then floundered erect in a sticky quagmire, plastered with wet sand and knee deep in the fluid mass.

He had no need to puzzle over his predicament. The shove had sent him several feet toward the center of the pool—a pool of deadly quicksand.

The more furiously he struggled toward the solid ground, the deeper his feet became imbedded and the more distant grew the shore. It was as if he strained for footing on a smooth, funnel-shaped surface, while an inexorable suction drew him down toward the vortex.

On the bank, his lips tightly compressed in a vindictive line, Reuel stood and watched the struggles.

"Matt Bellamy," he said, "it'd serve you right if I left you there to die. I don't know that I could save you, if I tried, and I've half a mind not to make that try. You hunted me last night in too much earnest to have a right to expect pity from me."

A grim expression stole over his face as he looked down on the other man from his position of safety on the bank.

"I'll get you out of there—if I can. But remember, it's for her I'm doing this, not any on your own account."

He paused a moment as if his ears had caught a sound inaudible to the other man's ears. A scowl gathered on his forehead.

"There he comes—the kid you filled with your fool notions. He's been trailing me all night and morning, and it'd serve you right for your share in this thing, if he shot me down before I could pull you out. It'll take a log to do it, and if I don't come back, you'll know what's happened. He'll shoot at sight, so there won't be time for explanations."

He listened again; then, as the footsteps of his pursuer drew near, he turned and glided away.

Bellamy scarcely heeded his departure. The cruel quicksand had risen almost to his hips. Both hands were clawing overhead toward the creepers that had saved his life before. But those he could reach were too few and too delicate to help him. They broke in his grasp like fragments of spider web. A yard, more or less, measured by his own straining body, was all that separated him from eternity.

CHAPTER XXI.

END OF THE MAN HUNT

CHRIS came upon the man he had been stalking, at a moment when such a possibility was least expected. The search had become almost mechanical. He had started out with the intention of avenging his sister's death and the intention had developed into a mania.

Suddenly, as he stumbled along, half-forgetful at moments of the terrible obsession that urged his dragging steps, he came in full sight of the gaunt body of his quarry as the latter was straining and struggling over a fallen log not a dozen yards away.

Quick as thought, he raised the rifle and fired; but he had no time for careful aim. The figure immediately straightened up and dived out of sight thru the saplings, toward the higher ground.

The long night had tamed the boy's impulses and endowed him with cunning. Now, instead of dashing blindly after the other, he crept forward cautiously. Arriving at the edge of the saplings, he scanned the rocky incline with the patience born of a single idea.

A head was cautiously raised from behind a small bowlder part way up the slope. The short report of Chris' rifle cause it to disappear abruptly. Reuel's exposure of his body while he was tugging at the log had been the most careless move of the whole night and morning. He had been discovered at a place where there was least opportunity for hiding. Except for a few scattered bowlders and clumps of shrubbery, the hillside was practically bald.

Chris did not risk failure by dashing forth to drive the hiding man from cover. The calculating calmness that he had acquired over night drew him back deeper into concealment. Then, with infinite caution, he commenced picking his way thru the inner confines of the brush blind.

When he emerged from concealment, he had moved so far from his original position that there was little chance of his being observed by one who was looking for him in the quarter where he had last appeared. With crouching steps, he glided up the hillside, his eyes concentrated on the bowlder behind which he knew Reuel to be hiding.

His maneuver at last brought into view the tense figure behind the rock shield. Reuel was engaged in rolling his coat into a compact bundle. He raised it above the crest of the bowlder and waited expectantly.

Puzzled, evidently, when this ruse drew no response from the rifle, he slowly elevated his own countenance, peering sharply at the wall of bushes and saplings. His gaze wandered searchingly along the edge of the vegetation. Suddenly he turned his head from left to right, then whirled apprehensively to glance to the rear.

With fascinated eyes he stared past the murderous-looking gun barrel, past the malicious figure of the boy whose unbalanced cunning had outwitted him. For one brief instant, the boy's aim wavered, then his hands recovered their uncanny firmness. Long and deliberately he aimed, while the pressure of his finger on the trigger slowly tightened.

This was the tableau that met Ruth's startled eyes as she clambered thru the orifice and emerged upon the hillside, not half a dozen yards from the heels of her brother.

There was no time to grasp the situation, no time for reasoning. With less presence of mind than pure, involuntary impulse, she uttered a piercing scream and stumbled toward him.

It was the scream that diverted his aim, for the impact of her body as she fell against his feet came an instant after the shot had been fired. Shaken and dazed, Chris stared down at the disheveled figure. The shock left him paralyzed in mind and body. He made no move toward assisting her to rise.

Reuel surprised them both by turning suddenly and running with the speed of desperation down the hillside. Chris looked from the fleeing figure to the weapon in his hands; then, with a sudden access of horror, he allowed the rifle to fall clattering to the ground. Ruth gained her feet and stood beside her brother, white-faced and panting, her hands unconsciously going up to her hair which had escaped from its fastenings.

It was a proper time for questions and explanations. The two, however, seemed to take the situation for granted. Their eyes were fixed on the unaccountably galvanized being who only a moment before had been the object of Chris Joplin's deadly hatred. He seemed endowed with the speed and energy of half a dozen men.

At the edge of the tree zone, as Reuel reached it, lay a great fallen log. It would have been a fair load for any ordinary strength, yet in his fury he swung it to his shoulder and plunged with it thru the trees as if it had been a sapling. Guided by the sudden splash of the log as he flung it down, and his labored, unrestrained breathing, the other two ran after him. Whatever his object, it evidently demanded the whole of a strong man's energy to accomplish.

Curious and apprehensive, they made their way along the rank timber growth. And then, before their astonished eyes, staggered forth two figures scarcely recognizable as human, so coated they were with the slimy, clinging deposit of the quicksand bed.

Reuel was supporting the other in his brawny grasp. As they burst thru the bushes, his burden struggled free, and stood fumbling with the soiled cloth that filled his mouth, giving his spattered countenance a ghastly, ferocious appearance.

Ruth stepped forward, wordless and half-comprehending, to do with her deft fingers what lay for the moment beyond the power of his trembling, mire-covered hands.

Supporting himself against the trunk of a tree, his chest rising and falling convulsively, Reuel waited while the first words of reassurance passed between the man he had rescued and the girl. Suddenly his voice cut in, hoarse from ex-

Why Rheumatism Comes With Cold Weather

(By VALENTINE MOTT PIERCE, M. D.)

A close connection exists between these two—cold weather and rheumatism. Prof. Alex. Haig, of London, has the most followers in the medical profession in the belief that the presence in the system of uric acid, or its salts in excess, is the real cause of rheumatism. Every one has recognized the difference in the appearance of their water as soon as it gets cold; there is often a copious sediment of "brickdust."

Several causes may lead up to an accumulation of uric acid in the system, which, in turn, cause rheumatism or gout, or creaky joints, swollen fingers, or painful joints. For one reason the skin does not throw off the uric acid, by profuse sweating, as in the hot weather, and the kidneys are unable to take care of the double burden. Another reason is that people do not drink as much water in cold weather as in summer, which helps to flush the kidneys. Again, they eat more meat in cold weather, and some people are so susceptible that they soon develop rheumatism after eating meat.

At all such times persons should drink copiously of hot water, say, a pint morning and night, and take Anuric three or four times a day. This Anuric comes in tablet form and can be had at almost any drug store. It dissolves the uric acid in the system and carries it outward. I would advise everyone to take Anuric occasionally, and continue for three or four weeks, and in that way avoid rheumatism, gout and many of the painful disorders due to uric acid in the system.

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haustion, but uncompromising as ever.

"Well, I reckon we're quits now," he said to the girl. "You saved my life, and I've given you back your—well, you've got what you want, I guess."

Ruth faced him, calm and wide-eyed.

"No," she countered gently. "Not quits—for I owe you more than I can ever hope to repay. The debt is all on my side. Will you—will you let me thank you?"

His face underwent a sudden contortion. Without answering, he suddenly turned on his heel. Then he paused, at the sound of voices and footsteps on the run. Evidently the rifle shots had drawn the searching party toward the spot.

Unhesitatingly, Bellamy stepped forward and laid a detaining hand on his half-brother's arms.

"Reuel," he began, "in a few hours at most we will be leaving the island. You have saved my life when you might have had a safe revenge for everything I tried to do to you in my misapprehension. I'm taking something away from here with me that is sweeter than life, and I can't have my happiness—Ruth's happiness—soured by the thought of hate and bitterness. I want to leave all that kind of thing among the other unhappy memories of the place, to be forgotten. We've both been hasty and hot-headed; let's shake hands now and proceed to forget it."

Reuel hesitated. His face lost none of its uncompromising grimness.

"I've hated you more than any other living being," he said. "Most of all, I've hated you because of the thing you're taking from the island with you. You've always had the best——"

"Look here," said Matt, "I can't hate

(Continued on Page 16.)

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

SALESMEN WANTED

WERE YOU EVER OFFERED A GROCERY Store? Our proposition is better. Let us tell you how you can handle Flour, Canned Goods, Provisions—an entire line of Groceries, as well as Paints, Roofing, Stock Foods, Automobile and Machinery Oils and Greases. No rent to pay, no investment in stock. Large orders taken from samples. Goods of guaranteed and proven quality. Selling experience not necessary. Very profitable work for "workers." Address R. S. Hill, President, Hitchcock Hill Co., Chicago. Reference: Any bank or express company.

TRAVELING SALESMEN WANTED—EXPErience unnecessary. Earn big pay while you learn at home during spare time. Only eight weeks required. Hundreds of good positions open. Write today for large list of openings and testimonials from hundreds of students we have placed in positions paying $100 to $500 per month. Address nearest office. Dept. B-37, National Salesmen Training Ass'n, Chicago, New York, San Francisco.

$22.50 PER WEEK AND EXPENSES TO Travel appointing agents for us. Send stamp Box 307, Shelby, N. C.

AGENTS WANTED

AMAZING, NEW INVENTION. MARVELous adding machine. Retails $7.50. Adds, subtracts, multiplies. Does work of $200 machine. Five-year guarantee. Offices, stores, factories buy from one to dozen. Enormous demand. Every demonstration sells. Write quick for trial offer and protected territory. Dept. B. Calculator Corporation, Grand Rapids, Mich.

AGENTS—MAKE A DOLLAR AN HOUR instead of a dollar a day. Sell Mendets, the famous patent patch for instantly mending leaks in graniteware, tin, brass, copper utensils and rubber goods without heat, solder, cement or rivet. Sample package and handsome catalogue of fast selling specialties free. Collette Mfg. Co., Dept. 707 B, Amsterdam, New York.

BIG TEXTILE MILLS WANT AMBITIOUS men and women everywhere to show latest dress fabrics, neckwear, hosiery, underwear, and sweaters. 400 styles. Easy sales. Values beat stores. Many making over $30 weekly. All or spare time. Complete sample outfit starts you. Steadfast Mills 18 Remsen St, Cohoes, N. Y.

AGENTS — STEADY INCOME. LARGE manufacturer of Handkerchiefs and [illegible] wants representative in each locality. Factory to consumer. Big profits, honest goods. Whole or spare time. Credit given. Send for particulars. Freeport Mfg. Co., [illegible] Main St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

MEN, WOMEN, SELL BEAUTE CREME. Removes wrinkles. Also Menthol Ointment. Leave on trial. Trial is sale. Good side line. Big Pay. Credit given. Freight allowed. Samples free. Reference required Horner Manufacturing, 540, Pittsburgh, Pa.

SELF HAIR-DRYING COMB JUST PATented (not electrical); Most wonderful article ever invented for women; dries the hair in a few minutes; 100 per cent profit. [illegible] competition. Venus Mfg. Co., 61/A Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

AGENTS—WONDERFUL NEW INVENTION. Every auto owner buys. Plenty of Re[illegible]. Quick action necessary. Big Moneymaker. Hudson Sales Co., 559 Regal Bldg., Chicago.

$1.00 PANTS ("ALLIANCESKIN") BARgains. Sell on sight. Suits to measure $7.50, up. Raincoats $3.85. Parcel post paid. Write for Free samples. Producers & Consumers Alliance, Dept. 216, Chicago.

AGENTS—GET PARTICULARS OF ONE OF the best paying propositions ever put on the market; something no one else sells; make $4,000 yearly. Address E. M. Feltman, Sales Mgr., 9754 3rd St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

AGENTS NOT EARNING $900 YEARLY should let us show them how to make much more. We train the inexperienced. Write today. Novelty Cutlery Co., 123 Bar St. Canton, Ohio.

SUIT $3.75, PANTS $1.00, MADE TO measure. For even a better offer than this write and ask for free samples and styles. Knickerbocker Tailoring Co., Dept. 514, Chicago, Ill.

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS REPREsentatives to sell shirts, underwear, hosiery, dresses, waists, skirts, direct to homes. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 586 Broadway, New York City.

AGENTS—SELL RELIABLE CUSTOM MADE raincoats. Big commission. Complete sample line free. Temple Raincoat Co., Box 61, Templeton, Mass.

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES TO men with rigs to introduce poultry compound. Year's contract. Imperial Mfg. Co., Dept. 67, Parsons, Kans.

AGENTS—I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff. 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. [illegible] Co., Dept. 81, St. Louis, Mo.

HELP WANTED

THOUSANDS GOVERNMENT JOBS OPEN to Men—Women. $75.00 month. Steady Work. Short hours. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for free list of positions now obtainable. Franklin Institute, Dep't. S 30, Rochester, N. Y.

LADY OR GENTLEMAN TO TRAVEL FOR old-established firm. No canvassing. Staple line. $18 weekly, pursuant to contract. Expenses advanced. G. K. Nichols, Philadelphia, Pa., Pepper Bldg.

BE YOUR OWN BOSS. STOP BEING A slave to wages. Increase your income by making your spare time valuable. Full particulars free. Globe Specialty House, Box 6, Wellton, Ariz.

HELP WANTED—(Continued)

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

EARN $15 TO $100 WEEKLY. LEARN THE business of compiling and selling names by mail to advertisers. Details free. Globe Publishing Co., 103 Syracuse, New York.

OVER $2 DAILY EASILY EARNED KNITting at home. Auto-Knitters furnished on time. Send 2c stamp. Dept. 78, Auto Knitter Co., 147 Franklin St., Buffalo, N. Y.

BECOME CHAUFFEURS. $25 WEEK. LEARN while earning. Sample lessons Free. Franklin Institute. Dep't. S 810, Rochester, N. Y.

$35 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Ursus Company, Dept. A1, Chicago, Ill.

$25 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Superba Co., W52, Baltimore, Md.

MALE HELP WANTED

DO YOU WANT A SURE JOB WITH BIG pay, easy hours and rapid advance? Write for my big Free book. DW 1034 which tells you how you can get a good Government position. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFfice, rural carrier "exams" everywhere soon. Get prepared by former Government civil service examiner. Booklet free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

NO STRIKE: 8 HOUR DAY. MEN EVERYwhere. Firemen, Brakemen, Baggagemen, $120. Colored Porters, Experience unnecessary. 686 Railway Bureau, E. St. Louis, Ill.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THORough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

BE A DETECTIVE. EARN FROM $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

WANTED RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS, $75.00 month. Sample examination questions free. Franklin Institute, Dep't. S 28, Rochester, N. Y.

SILVER MIRRORS, PLATING TABLEware, auto-brass. Home plans free. Clarence Sprinkle, Dept. 2. Marion, Ind.

GOVERNMENT FARMERS NEEDED. BIG salaries. Permanent job. Light work. Write, Ozment, 68F, St. Louis, Mo.

ALL MEN—WOMEN DESIRING $85, GOVernment job near home, write immediately. Ozment, K. St. Louis.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

REAL ESTATE

BEST OPPORTUNITIES TODAY ARE IN the South for farm and other homeseekers. Low priced lands, largest profits per acre in grain, alfalfa and other crops, healthful home regions; openings for live stock, dairy, poultry, fruit and truck farmers. Write for literature. M. V. Richards, Ind. & Agr. Commr., Room 5 Southern Railway, Washington, D. C.

A SMALL FARM IN CALIFORNIA WILL make you more money with less work. You will live longer and better. Delightful climate. Rich soil. Hospitable neighbors. Good roads, schools and churches. Write for our San Joaquin Valley illustrated folders free. C. L. Seagraves, Industrial Commissioner, AT&SF Ry., 1931 Ry. Exch., Chicago.

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

LANDLESS MEN! TEN ACRES MEANS independence. Excellent tracts for poultry, truck, fruit; near town. Best county in Michigan. Only $250. $5 down, $4 monthly. Other lands for general farming. Write for free booklet. Swigart Land Co., S-1252 First National Bank Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

PROFITABLE LITTLE FARMS IN VALLEY of Virginia, 5 and 10 acre tracts $250 and up. Good fruit and farming country. Send for literature now. F. H. LaBaume, Agr. Agt., N. & W. Ry., 248 Arcade Bldg., Roanoke, Va.

FARMS WANTED

I HAVE CASH BUYERS FOR SALABLE farms. Will deal with owners only. Give full description, location and cash price. James P. White, New Franklin, Mo.

FARMS WANTED— HAVE 7,000 BUYERS; describe your unsold property. 504 Farmers Exchange, Denver, Colo.

MISSOURI LAND

POOR MAN'S CHANCE—$5.00 DOWN, $5.00 monthly buys 40 acres productive land; some timber, near town, price $200.00. $10.00 monthly buys 80 acres. Box 425-S, Carthage, Mo.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

MAKE MONEY QUICK—IN MOVING PICture business. We start you and furnish guaranteed outfit on easy payment plan. No experience needed. Catalog free. Monarch Film Service, 228 Union Ave., Dept. C, Memphis, Tenn.

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog Free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

MOTION PICTURE PLAYS

WRITE PHOTOPLAYS, SHORT STORIES, poems; $100 each. No correspondence course. Details free. Atlas Publishing Co., 344, Cincinnati.

WRITE PHOTOPLAYS; $25-$300 PAID. EXperience unnecessary; details free to new writers. Producers League, 400, St. Louis.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INVESTORS MAGAZINE FREE TO YOU. $10 invested with us has made others $300 in few months. Our magazine, "Hoffman's Investment Journal," tells how this was done. This magazine gives facts about the real earning power of money. Tells how many have started on the road to fortune. To introduce it we will send three months Free. If you want to make money, write today saying, "send your magazine." Hoffman Trust Company, 339 Kress Building, Houston, Texas.

INVEST $10—MAY MAKE FORTUNE. MILlions being made by fortunate investors in Great Coastal Oil Fields. Single wells have produced upwards of $15,000 daily. Absolute guarantee of production furnished. Small monthly payments secure Big interest with us in Valuable oil leases on which we plan to drill many wells. Write for literature. Great Southern Oil Association, 1300 Carter Building, Houston, Texas.

$15 INVESTED MAY MAKE $1,000 YEARly. Gets Warranty Deed, also interest in Co-operative oil well we're getting ready to drill in big gusher oil territory. $1 cash, $1 monthly. Four lots $56. Buy before raise in price, which may be soon. Particulars free. Triangle Oil Company, 407 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

THE CORPORATION OF BRUNSWICK, MD. Situated on the Potomac River and on main Line of B. & O. R. R., invites correspondence with industries. Excellent shipping facilities. Address Mayor and Council, Brunswick, Md.

$20 BUYS DEED TO LAND, ALSO INTERest in oil wells that should pay you $100 for every dollar invested; payments $1 monthly; complete information free. Address Texas-Gulf Co., 1105 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

OKLAHOMAN PETROLEUM COMPANY— Building a big oil producing enterprise—offers shares at attractive price. Lawyers Trust Company, Fiscal Agent, Oklahoma City.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

INVENTIONS

INVENTIONS COMMERCIALIZED ON CASH and royalty basis. Inventors and manufacturers write at once. Adam Fisher Mfg. Co., 2044 Railway Exchange, St. Louis, Mo.

SONG POEMS WANTED

SONG POEMS WANTED—FOR BEST OFFER submit manuscript to Needham Music Co., D 44 St. Louis Mo.

TRAPPERS

SEND FOR FUR PRICE LIST, FREE trappers' guide and particulars of free gift to trappers. Hill Bros. Fur Co., 450 N. Main St., St. Louis, Mo.

HONEY

BEST QUALITY NEW CLOVER HONEY. 30 lb. can $3.60; two or more cans, $3.45 each. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Sample 10 cts. Price list free. M. V. Facey, Preston, Minn.

NAMES

WE PAY 25c EACH FOR NAMES AND ADdresses. Send dime for contract. Directory, Grand Rapids, Mich.

OLD COINS WANTE[illegible]

WILL PAY $2.00 FOR [illegible]LLAR, proof; 10c for 1912 nickels S. Mint; $100.00 for Dime 1894 S. Mint. We want thousands coins and stamps. We offer up to $1000.00 for certain dates. Send 4c now for our Large Illustrated Coin Circular. Numismatic Bank, Dept. 12, Fort Worth, Texas.

HAIR DRESSING

THE LATEST STYLES IN HAIR DRESSING. Every lady should have our Beautifully Illustrated Booklet on hair dressing. This Booklet explains and illustrates all of the latest styles thoroughly. Mailed on receipt of 25c coin. Supply limited, write today. Address: Styles Publishing House, Gloversville, N. Y.

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Actual search and patentability report free. Send sketches and description, or model, of your invention. My patent sales service gets full value. 1916 Edition ninety-page patent book free. George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas, they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

INVENT SOMETHING. IT MAY BRING wealth. Free book tells what to invent and how to obtain a patent through our credit system. Waters and Co. Succeeded by Talbert & Parker, 4276 Warder Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PROTECT. ADVICE AND Books Free. Highest references. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, 624 F St., Washington, D. C.

PERSONAL

GET MARRIED QUICK. BEFORE YOU are too old. "Paradox," 21 years old offers big selection of ladies and gentlemen, many wealthy and handsome, improve yourself by corresponding with opposite sex, all parts of world. Biggest, best, cleanest, oldest correspondence paper. Free copy. "Paradox," Dept. 91, Berwyn, Ill.

LET ME READ YOUR CHARACTER FROM your handwriting. Mind you get a good reading that will help you in love, health, business and domestic affairs. Price 10c. Money back if dissatisfied. H. G. Beauchamp, 2583 8th Ave., New York City.

LONELY MEN—WOMEN, YOUNG—OLD, correspond. Make new friends by mail. No matrimonial agency. Paper containing hundreds letters, addresses, complete, from both men—women, 10c. Social Review, Dept. W, Charlotte, Michigan.

OUR SHINO, CHEMICAL CLOTH ABSORBS the dust, other dusters send it flying. Will ship one prepaid for 25c. Satisfaction guaranteed or money back. Specialty House Co., Box 1329, Detroit, Mich.

WEAK, NERVOUS, RUN DOWN MEN; REmember we cure chronic, nervous, blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book, symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Dr. Meyers, 316 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

MARRY RICH. BE HAPPY AND PROSPERous. Big list of descriptions and photos of congenial people with means free. Sealed, confidential. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Grayslake, Ill.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

REAL PHOTOS, ARTISTS' MODELS, BATHing girls, etc. Silver dime brings sample and catalog. B. W. Shaw, 18 Bowdoin St., Boston.

MARRY IF LONELY. HUNDREDS RICH wish marriage soon; confidential; descriptions free. "The Successful Club," Box 556, Oakland, Calif.

MARRY—10000 WORTH $100 TO $100,000; 20th year; 10c, sealed. B. W. Love, Box 1616, Denver, Colo.

MAIDEN, WORTH $100,000, VERY LONELY, would marry good man. G. G. Box 4, San Diego, Cal.

MATRIMONIALLY INCLINED?—DESCRIPtions and addresses sealed, 12c. Henry Mallon, 2250 N. Kostner Ave., Chicago.

NAMES, ADDRESSES, DESCRIPTIONS OF girls anxious to marry. Dime and stamp. Box 555, Yates Center, Kansas.

"FROM THE BALL ROOM TO HELL," mailed anywhere, 25c. L. E. Muncy, 136 E. Pleasant Ave., A, Syracuse, N. Y.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL PAper published. Mailed free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUBlication for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

CHRIST—WOUNDMARKED ANNE CATH. Emmerich and Visions, 250 pages, bound, for 20c. Klein Co., Brandon, Minn.

MARRY RICH, HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. R. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRIAGE PAPER WITH NAMES, ADdresses, photos, descriptions. 4 months, 25c. Box 2265 R., Boston, Mass.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, I. [illegible] under act of March 3, 1879

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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BACK NUMBERS.

Back numbers of the Ledger promptly mailed. Always give the dates desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address. Price 5 cents per copy.

ADVERTISING RATES.

For Display, $2.50 each Agate Line; for Classified, 80 cents a word, per insertion for circulation of the Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

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READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Poker and love are both games of bluff.

It's a poor brand of charity that sticks to the fingers.

Don't wear clothing loud enough to attract a crowd.

If you would be paid according to your ideas of your worth, get busy.

A small cottage at the seashore is better than a dozen air castles.

About two-thirds of the bread cast upon the waters isn't returnable.

Marriage will change a man's views about women quicker than anything else.

A man may select his own companions, but his relations are always thrust upon him.

An Ohio husband calls his wife "Birdie" because she is always associated in his mind with a bill.

It's awfully hard for the average man to look in a mirror and believe that he was once a cute baby.

A man may class his wife as a bird of paradise during the honeymoon—and as a parrot later in the game.

If a woman didn't have a better opinion of a man than he deserves, it's a safe bet she would never marry him.

Nearly every man has a plan for making the world better, but he is seldom able to build in accord therewith.

Every time a rich man dies some one who hasn't a dollar is sure to remind you that shrouds have no pockets.

And if you have more money than you know what to do with, any of your fool friends will be glad to advise you.

For a man to make a woman happy during courtship is much easier than it is for him to make good after marriage.

When trouble comes wabbling along a woman gives way to a flood of tears and a man proceeds to tint the atmosphere blue.

A philosopher says when a woman reaches the age where she's not worth looking at she's old enough to be worth listening to.

The average girl would rather hear a young man say he is jealous of her than have him tell her she inspires him to great deeds.

Three hundred years ago any man absent from church on Sunday was fined a shilling. What a war revenue that would produce now!

Probably there is nothing so meaningless as the kiss one woman bestows upon another—unless it is the large, expansive smile of a hotel clerk.

A wise girl never lets the young man she has spotted for her own see her with her hair in curl papers until after the parson has said his fatal words.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Not for many seasons has there been such a tremendous vogue for metal laces especially silver metals.

The dress which in Paris they call the "robe-chemise" is twin-sister to the one-piece frock which is so popular in America. It actually is a one-piece dress, made of the most supple materials and confined at the waist by a narrow belt or a picturesque length of ribbon.

Gabardine is again very fashionable; also a soft make of cashmere which has tiny hairs all over its surface. All the supple makes of satin and faille will be in great demand this winter. Chemise-robes made of these will be worn under wrap-coats for restaurant teas, visits, etc.

The latest fur coat is made like a Russian blouse, very loose and almost knee length. These coats are made of all the short-haired furs and they are belted in with ceintures of Russian leather, richly embroidered, or with belts made of glove kid and adorned with handsome buckles.

One could talk forever about the buttons used this season. Almost every new costume shows a new button. Engraved crystal and aluminum are elaborate; a mosaic shell button is odd. The buckle button serves two purposes. Enamel and rhinestones, beveled jet and steel and rhinestone and steel are artistic combinations. Ribbon-covered molds, molds covered with bunched beads and some in leather in pinwheel effect are products of the dressmakers' art. Some buttons are braided, many embroidered, and some even covered with straw. Hand-painted glass buttons are used on lingerie, while buttons edged with wired braid loops are surely a novelty.

❧

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Muffins left from breakfast can be split and toasted for luncheon.

Shirts should be suspended from the bottom on the clothes line.

Warm lemons before squeezing them and twice the juice will be obtained.

Cabbage boiled and covered with cream sauce makes a good winter vegetable.

To make boiled potatoes white let lie (pared) in cold water for two or three hours previous to cooking.

A little flour spread over the top of cakes before they are iced will prevent the icing from running off.

Keep candles on the ice for a day before using on a birthday cake, and they will burn slowly and evenly.

Put a silver spoon into the most delicate glass and boiling hot liquids can be poured into it without breaking it.

Lemons may be kept a long time without becoming dry if put into a jar of water with a lid. Change the water once a week if the lemons are to be kept long. When used they will be found as firm and juicy as when fresh.

When the steel parts of a kitchen range become brown, dampen a small piece of cloth in ordinary vinegar and rub the parts affected. The brown tinge will very quickly disappear, and then the usual polishing may be done with a most pleasant result.

One tablespoonful of brown sugar added to two tablespoonfuls of flour and three of cold water and cooked, stirring constantly, until creamy, makes a most excellent paste and is a splendid sizing where wall paper refuses to stick to a painted wall.

To clean hair brushes, take a cupful of cornmeal and fill the brush, rubbing gently with the hand. As it absorbs the grease and dirt shake it out and use fresh meal till the brush is cleansed thoroly. This is better than ammonia, as there is no water to injure or loosen the back of the brush.

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RECIPES.

TOMATO CATSUP—Cut up four quarts of ripe tomatoes and put in a porcelain kettle to boil; prepare one-half pint of sugar, one-half pint of strong cider vinegar, or more if not strong, one tablespoon of salt, one tablespoon of cloves, one of allspice, one-quarter teaspoon cayenne pepper; boil the tomatoes thirty minutes, then rub them thru a sieve. Now put them on with spice, vinegar and sugar, and boil until there is about two quarts and one pint. Cool and bottle.

DATE PIE—Make a rich pastry shell and bake it. Fill with the following mixture: Wash a pound of dates, beat them (after removing the stones) in a quart of milk, when soft run thru a sieve and add one egg, well beaten, a pinch of salt, and pour into the baked shell. Cover with whipped cream and serve cold.

SCOTCH POTATOES—One quart of medium-sized potatoes, one quart of medium-sized onions, one cup milk, one-fourth cup breadcrumbs, one teaspoon butter, one teaspoon, salt, one-eighth teaspoon paprika. Wash and pare potatoes and onions; put both in saucepan and cover with boiling water and one teaspoonful salt; boil fifteen minutes, drain, put into bake dish, alternating an onion, then a potato, pour over the milk, sprinkle with breadcrumbs, add the butter and a dash of paprika; put in oven and bake twenty to twenty-five minutes. Serve in the dish in which they are baked.

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ICE MASSAGE.

Beauty specialists have long employed ice massage as a means of overcoming wrinkles and sagging tisues by firming them and causing the skin to tighten. Medical experts now lend their authority to its use, not only as a specific for these maddening furrows, but as a general tonic and beautifier. Some day when you feel fatigued and must be refreshed within a short time try this ice massage and observe the magic results. For home use place a small piece of ice in a linen handkerchief or piece of cheesecloth and pass gently but firmly and slowly over the cheeks, using the rotary motion, around, up and out. Harder pressure is employed when going up than down in order to pull back the cheek muscles. Continue over the cheeks, along the nose, chin and forehead until the skin feels cool and refreshed and assumes a rosy hue. Massage movements are also employed for use over the throat or wherever the skin requires this beautifying process. First bathe the skin to remove impurities, rinsing in cool water before applying the ice massage.

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COLORED FOOTGEAR.

For decades past the conservative woman has been shod all in black. A few years ago an exception was made in favor of tan for sport wear and rough-weather wear. Then white was permitted entry as a summer competitor. But blues, reds, greens and violets—fashion held up hands of holy horror. What a change has been wrought within a few months. Colored boots and pumps for street wear are so fashionable now that black footwear has become the exception with a formal costume. And with black boots have disappeared black stockings. The fashionable shade in hosiery this season is pale gray—in a thread silk weave, so fine that the flesh tone gleams thru the gray. These delicate gray silk stockings have replaced in fashion's favor the champagne and tan tints worn last season. The boots match the costume, but it is not necessary for the stockings to do so, and the pale gray silk hose are worn with every kind of boot except white ones, which, of course, demand white hosiery.

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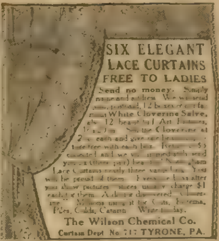
Not Like Her.

Bacon—"I met your wife downtown today."

Egbert—"Really? What did she have to say?"

"Oh, very little."

"I say, old man, that wasn't my wife."



SIX ELEGANT LACE CURTAINS FREE TO LADIES

Send no money. Simply name and address. We will send you, postpaid, 12 boxes of our famous White Cloverine Salve, also 12 beautiful Art Pictures. [illegible] Sell the Cloverine at 25c each and give one picture free with each box. Return $3 collected and we will immediately send you six (three pair) beautiful Nottingham Lace Curtains nearly three yards long. You will be proud of them. [illegible] your picture [illegible] charge $1 each for them. [illegible] Cloverine [illegible] Millions using it for Cuts, Eczema, Piles, Colds, Catarrh. Write today.

The Wilson Chemical Co.
Curtain Dept No 717 TYRONE, PA.

ODORLESS

INDOOR TOILET

Sanitary and Odorless on ten days

FREE TRIAL

No Money Down — No Deposit

No more outside back yard inconveniences. No chambers to empty. No sewer or cesspool. Chemical process dissolves human waste in water. No trouble. Kills disease germs. Prevents flies, filth and [illegible] old, young or invalids. [illegible] health.

Costs 1 Cent a Week to Operate per Person.

Place in any room, hall or closet. No trouble to install. [illegible] etc. AGENTS WANTED.

Kawneer Cabinet Co.,
614 Kawneer Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

SPECIFICATIONS
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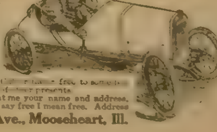

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The Smuggler.

(Continued From Page 5.)

wind is dead against us, and it will take some time to tack back home again, but, of course, if you think best, I am quite willing."

"Oh, I hardly think it would be wise, dear," she replied. "The girls have an engagement, you know. Some other time."

So we sailed home again, speculating as to which island Gordon Bennett owned, until we saw that gentleman himself embarking with his friend in an immaculate little launch, glistening with white paint and absolutely spotless in every respect. We learned later on that the islanders are quite as particular about the appearance of their boats as are the cottagers at Bar Harbor about their equipages, and that there is among them a friendly rivalry on the subject. We hailed him merrily and challenged him to race us home, and in spite of Lord Wilfrid's statement about the wind the boat cut thru the water at a good pace. The salt spray dashed up in our faces and our hair blew into our eyes, but we did not care, for we reached the slip a full minute before Mr. Bennett, and could exult over his defeat even while obliged to admire his boat.

"But this is not the boat you left at the slip the day it stormed," remarked Gabrielle; "this is much newer—yes, and much prettier, but I believe the other is faster. When you race with us you must always take your swiftest boat, you know."

"But I can't race that boat, unfortunately," he returned, with a short laugh. "When I came to get it that morning it had vanished entirely—broken away, I suppose—and I had to go home in a fishing smack I happened to be able to hire. I think it is very inhospitable of you to keep your boat-house door locked."

"I think so, too," agreed Elizabeth, "and if I can ever remember it I am going to get a locksmith from the village and have it opened."

We were all ready to do justice to the nice hot cakes and tea Mary Anne had waiting for us, and we found Mr. Blake quite an acquisition. He was a quiet man, who, as Gabrielle said, always seemed to be about to make a brilliant remark and never did, but kept us on the alert waiting for it.

Lady Edith took off her hat and laid it on the chair beside her, and I idly picked it up, smoothing out the veil which was knotted around it and thinking how wonderfully well it suited her flower-like face. Suddenly I paused, however, for in the veil fastening the chiffon to the hat brim, I saw a small gold pin shaped like a key, and the counterpart of one link of my cuff button.

I was about to draw it out and ask her about it, for the design was unusual, when I saw a gray shadow cross her face and her eyes dilate strangely. She was looking beyond me, straight at Gordon Bennett, and I looked also, wondering greatly.

He was bending forward, cup in hand, talking to Gabrielle, and a ray from the setting sun reached the spoon, causing it to gleam as he moved it and insensibly attract the eye. Something else gleamed also from his white cravat, and I saw that his scarf-pin was the head of the Sphinx in raised dull gold.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

An Island Vendetta.

(Continued From Page 14.)

you now—you've disarmed me. You've got more to forget than I have, and that's the only way you can get the best of me now."

Instinctively, he had sent a shaft thru the vulnerable point of Reuel's armor. The keynote to Reuel's character was an independence that would brook no yoke, physical or mental. The exploring party was close at hand. Reuel met the level questioning look with a final burst of defiance, like the last flicker of an expiring flame, then his glance fell.

"Oh, shake hands, and be hanged!" he said gruffly

To the girl, it almost seemed that she had witnessed a miracle in the handclasp of the two deadly enemies. But the men who the next moment burst thru the trees did not know they had arrived upon the culmination of a miracle. They saw only a disreputable-looking quartet of people, two of them so startlingly disfigured and plastered that at first the impulse of the newcomers was to raise their carbines for defense.

Before they recovered their faculties sufficiently for speech, the bushes were parted by a tall, thin figure, who came slowly toward the little group, his dark-rimmed eyes blazing from a pale and haggard countenance. Chris stared at the newcomer as if he had been an apparition.

"Froelich!" he gasped.

No; Matt Bellamy did not marry Ruth as soon as they reached port, and it was his own lack of caution that lost him the opportunity. She had been ready to brave the whole gamut of comment that would result from her marriage with an unknown seaman; but when Matt confided that he was fairly well off in his own name and belonged to several exclusive Gotham clubs, she suddenly altered her plans. When the wedding did occur, some months later, it was conventional in every way.

Chris acted as best man; and among those present must also be mentioned a certain carroty-topped usher who seemed to take an unusually deep interest in the whole procedure, despite his evident humiliation at the open-faced regalia, appropriate to the event, in which his big-boned figure was garbed.

The End.

* * *

WEATHER NOTES.

The rain is quite a useful thing;
  We could not do without it.
The flowers grow and robins sing
  Because of and about it.
To stop its raining all the time
  Would surely be a pity,
But on some days it seems a crime
  To have rain in the city.

I'd like to offer some advice
  If but the rain would heed it:
Go make the country wet and nice—
  The farmers always need it.
Still, it should not delay their toil,
  But come just at the right time,
Wash out the air and wet the soil
  Discreetly in the night time.

If in the city you remain,
  Kind rain and much respected,
Oh, will you not come, gentle rain.
  When company's expected?
Especially the prosy folk—
  At least those who so strike us—
But keep away and play no joke
  On those we like who like us.

* * *

He Unhitched.

"What we want to do," suggested the tobacconist, "is to get a horse and rig."

"Before we decide on that," said the tall, sad-looking man, "I want to know whether you other fellows know how to harness and unharness a horse."

"You can hitch up a horse, and that's enough," retorted the tobacconist.

"No," insisted the tall, sad-looking man, "it is not enough. I refuse to do all the horse harnessing myself or to ride in a rig where a novice has done the harnessing."

"Is harnessing a horse anything so wonderful?" asked the tobacconist.

"No," answered the tall, sad man, "but there are those who cannot do it. There's my brother-in-law. He can't.

"Once when we lived in the suburbs and had a horse and buggy he came to visit us. One night he was going to a dance and borrowed our horse and buggy. I hitched up for him and showed him how to unhitch when he got back. But at two o'clock in the morning he roused me to announce his return and to say that I had better come out and unharness the horse, as he had forgotten my lesson.

"I told him that I'd be darned if I'd get out of bed at that hour of the night and unhitch a horse for anybody.

"He insisted that he couldn't do it and I said, 'Well, if you don't do it you'll stay out all night, because you'll never get into this house until you have unharnessed the horse!'

"In about two hours and a half he woke me up again and said he wanted to get in. He explained that he had unharnessed the horse. 'Now,' I said, 'ain't you glad you persevered? That's the way to learn. It's like learning to swim. The way to do is to throw them in and let 'em swim or drown.'

"My brother-in-law never said a thing; just went up to bed."

"I guess he didn't unhitch the horse at all, eh?" suggested the tobacconist.

"Unhitch!" snorted the tall, sad man. "I should say he did! There never was a horse so thoroly unhitched as that one! All you have to do to unharness a horse is to unbuckle four straps and slide the harness off and hang it up on the peg. But there are fifty-seven buckles and ninety-nine various-sized straps on a harness that are never unbuckled at all. But that young man had unbuckled every buckle, and there were no two straps fastened together when he got done. The barn floor was covered with enough stuff to make three or four sets of harness. I couldn't get all the straps together again, so I had to take the whole outfit to a harness maker."

"Well I guess we'll take a couple of harnessmakers along," agreed the tobacconist, who never was much to argue.

* * *

His Fear.

In the early days of Ohio's history Governor Vance paid a visit to the State prison. He let it be known that he wished every man to be free to come up and talk to him, make any complaint that he felt justified in making, and that they would receive attention. Every man but one appeared, and every man who appeared related a tale of woe and innocence. Not one of them should be there. Finally the Governor's attention was directed to one old fellow, a hard-looking customer, who remained in his cell. He was summoned.

"What are you in for?" the Governor asked.

"Stealing, sir."

"Are you guilty of the crime of which you were convicted?"

"Sure, I got nothin' to say—no kick to make."

The Governor went back to his office and pardoned him. When remonstrated with, he said: "Why, I was afraid he'd contaminate those other fellows."

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Or, A Million at Stake

By Captain Jack Judson

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CHAPTER IV.

BILLY TO THE RESCUE.

NO PERSON knew the great city better than Billy O'Neil, Ned Castleman's friend. Billy was cunning and gifted with an alertness which had obtained for him the nickname of "the Weasel." He had not seen Ned since the latter's employment by Barrow & Batch and therefore knew nothing of the adventures we have already related.

It was a hot afternoon the day after Ned's capture by Boris Barrow in front of the show-house, and Billy was lying on the grass in Battery Park. He was not asleep, altho the hour was a good one for a nap, for he was listening to the conversation of two men who occupied a seat within a few feet of him.

"So you really nabbed the young scamp last night?" said one of the men, the smaller of the pair.

"That I did."

"Tell me about it."

"There isn't much to tell," was the reply. "I happened to catch sight of him entering a 'movie,' and in I went at his heels. The fact that he left our employ so suddenly had rendered me suspicious, and I wanted to get him out of the way. Well, when he left the place I got busy and nabbed him on the sidewalk before he had the slightest idea that any one was on his trail. He was inclined to put up a little racket, but I whistled for a taxi and tossed him into it before he could say 'Jack Robinson.' He's caged now, and you can bet a thousand!"

"Where did you land your catch?" eagerly inquired the little man.

"Where but in Bascome street at the old nest over which English Julia presides. He's safe there, for he's locked in the cellar, and Julia has her instructions."

"You were lucky to catch him so easily," was the response. "I half believe that boy saw the Countess when she came to the office and lost her pin."

"I've no doubt of it. Now, within forty-eight hours I'll get hold of the lady, and if Old Condor should turn up, why, we'll finish him, too, and then we can play the game without fear of being baffled."

The hearing of these words sent a thrill thru Billy's frame. He felt that they referred to Ned, tho his name had not been mentioned. In fact, Billy had recognized the men as Barrow & Batch, and every word told him that Ned had fallen into their power and was no longer in their employ.

He did not stir till the two worthies had taken their departure, which they did with their air of victors, and he watched them till they were no longer to be seen.

"I'll see about that little trick of yours, Mr. Barrow," the Weasel said to himself. "If you have left Ned in the house in Bascome street presided over by that ex-jailbird, English Julia, he is in real danger, and I will see what I can do for him."

An hour later he might have been seen entering Bascome street with every sense on the alert. He knew he was contending with two of the most adroit rascals in the city, and did not care to fall into their clutches.

Straight to the house he went and rapped on the door. After some time a key turned in the lock, and the portal was opened revealing a face which he had seen before. English Julia was surely on guard.

"What is it, you little wolf?" she demanded, and was about to shut the door in Billy's face when he slipped inside with a grin and faced the wrathful woman.

"I didn't invite you in," she went on, her face becoming red with rage. "You're not wanted here, and——"

"But I'm here," broke in the boy who had backed against the wall where he was as immovable as a post. "I just thought I'd call."

"I say I don't want you here," was the retort. "When you're needed I'll send for you."

"Exactly," smiled the Weasel, abating none of his coolness. "I want to see my chum."

The woman breathed hard and started.

"I'm not keeping a boarding-house for chums," she flashed, and made a move toward Billy with clinched fists.

"Oh, you're not? You don't happen to have any one in the cellar, I suppose?"

"I'm alone in the house, cellar included. Get out!"

As the Weasel did not show signs of obeying the loud command, English Julia again bristled up like a porcupine.

"I'll throw you out, you shrimp!" she almost roared.

"Which may be easier said than done," grinned Billy. "Let me see. The door yonder leads to the cellar, doesn't it?"

He took a step forward when he was pounced upon with all the fury of a lioness.

"Not quite so fast!" said the boy." "You've got a nice record in the police courts, and if you don't let me have my way I'll call the police."

"Don't you dare!"

"Then be civil," was the reply. "Is the cellar door locked?"

"What business is it of yours?"

"I'll take a look," and a bound brought the agile Weasel to the door, which of course he found fastened and beyond his power to open.

"You've got Ned in the cellar, sure enough," he said, looking back at her. "Mr. Barrow of Broadway brought him here and put him in your care with certain instructions. Give me the key."

"Get it if you can!" defied the woman.

"Very well. It's the key or the police. Take your choice, English Julia.

The viperess fairly frothed at the mouth. Her eyes seemed to emit flashes of fire, and her form quivered with rage and illy suppressed passion.

A sudden thought appeared to take possession of her. Reaching into her bosom she produced a key which she hurled at the boy, who caught it deftly and turned to the door. With one eye on the infamous creature, Billy inserted the key in the lock and turned it with a click. As he pulled the door open he leaned into the gaping darkness and called:

"Ned! Ned! Are you there?"

He heard an instant response and the noise of a scramble, and the next moment some one came up the rickety steps.

"Thank Heaven! Is it you, Billy?"

"It's no one else, Ned."

At that moment there was a cry behind the Weasel, and he beheld the irate creature almost upon him with an uplifted club. There was murder in the flaming eyes, and the next moment the club would have descended with crashing force upon Billy's head if he had not arrested it with a sudden leap. The stick was caught in midair, and by a sudden twist torn from the woman's hands and flung down the hall.

"Now," cried Billy, facing her with the astonished Ned at his side, "if you try any more of your love tricks there'll be a dead jail pigeon in this nest. Come, Ned. I guess we'd better get out of this hole."

English Julia could not speak for anger. She stammered, for she could do no more, and the two boys left her in her ravings and sprang from the house.

"How in the world did you know I was in there?" asked Ned, when they reached the street.

"A little bird told me," smiled the Weasel. "It was luck. I was lounging in Battery Park today. I'll tell the story later on."

When they were well out of harm's way Billy related his adventure, and in return Ned told the story of his capture by Boris Barrow in front of the "movie" and his subsequent adventures.

"They won't give up their hunt for you," Billy said. "They don't want you at large, Ned."

"I know that. I know a good deal about the great piece of mischief those two scoundrels have on hand, and I'm going to baffle them, if it costs my life."

"It may do that, Ned."

"Old Iliff shall not be robbed if I can help it, and his pretty niece shall not become the wife of Basil Batch."

"So that's the game, eh?" said Billy. "Well, you can count on Billy O'Neil in any emergency."

An hour had hardly elapsed ere Boris Barrow walked into the old house and was confronted by English Julia.

"How's the bird coming on?" he asked, with a grin.

"He's gone."

Mr. Barrow seemed to stagger against the wall.

"Gone?" he echoed as he grew white at the gills. "No, you don't mean that?"

"I was asleep," she lied, with the glibness of Ananias. "You see I take an afternoon siesta, for it's good for one's health. I suddenly found myself facing a revolver in the hands of a street Arab and the gun looked bigger than a cannon. Before I could even offer resistance the key was snatched from me and—well, that's the upshot of the whole matter."

Mr. Barrow cursed till words failed him.

"It's a pretty kettle of fish," he finally said, when he had cooled down a little. "But never mind. I'm as full of tricks as a dog is of fleas, and the next time I get that boy he won't need a cage. By George! I'll go to work at once," and leaving English Julia, he bounded from the house, slamming the door behind him with an oath.

A faint smile appeared at the woman's lips, and she vanished in a room at one side of the hall.

CHAPTER V.

THE RED DEATH.

HAVING escaped from the clutches of Boris Barrow and his jaileress, English Julia, Ned was more than ever desirous of saving Hector Iliff and his pretty niece, Doris, from the claws of the infamous human wolves.

He resolved to pay another visit to the old millionaire's house, and to this end, on the night after his rescue by Billy, he appeared at the door with another basket of peaches. He was admitted with a smile and easily disposed of his luscious wares. The old man looked more feeble than ever, and the boy could readily see that he was an easy victim for the designing pair.

When the girl had conducted him into the hall and was about to let him out, he laid one hand gently on her arm and looked up into her eyes.

"I would like to have a word with you," said he. "It is asking a good deal, I know, but I have something of great importance to say."

"Certainly," was the reply, and Ned was led into a little room and Doris told him to proceed.

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"When I was here the other night," Ned began," "I saw something that startled me."

"In this house?"

"Yes, miss. When I saw you admit the man whom I know as Basil Batch, I mounted the staircase and looked into the parlor thru the transom. There was no one in the room then but your uncle and his visitor."

"I remember that I left them alone."

"Basil Batch had hardly seated himself when he began to make strange passes before Mr. Iliff's eyes with his hands, and the old gentleman fell under his power."

Doris started and turned pale. "Do you mean that he mesmerized him?" she exclaimed.

"He did nothing else, for I have seen just such work in the shows."

"You startle me, but go on, for I am anxious to hear your whole story."

"By and by Mr. Iliff rose from his chair and went over to his private safe, which he opened, and came back with a large roll of bills, which he handed to Basil Batch."

The girl breathed hard. "And what did Basil Batch do?" she gasped.

"He coolly transferred the money to his pocket. It was downright robbery under the spell which he had cast over Mr. Iliff."

"It is monstrous!" exclaimed the girl. "I will tell Uncle Hector——"

"Not yet," interrupted Ned. "The time has not come for that. Is it true that you are to become the wife of that man?"

The fair face before Ned reddened and then suddenly grew white.

"I am going to tell you the truth," she went on, after a little pause. "You may not know that I am the sole relative of Hector Iliff, and therefore his only heir. I would do anything in the world for him."

"I do not doubt that, miss."

"When he asked me to marry Basil Batch, of whose history I know nothing, I give my consent, tho I could not conceive why he should exact such a promise from me."

"Because he is as putty in Basil Batch's hands!" exclaimed Ned, with rising indignation. "That man has a partner who is in league with him, a man of his own type, named Boris Barrow. The plot is simply this: You are first to become the wife of Basil Batch, then Mr. Iliff is to die——"

"No, no! You cannot mean that."

"It is true."

Doris in her excitement sprang to her feet and stared at Ned like one half-demented.

"I never heard of such a terrible thing!" she cried. "I have read of deep, dark plots in novels, but never of one like this."

"But you don't love Basil Batch?"

"Love him?" The girl clinched her hands. "How could I ever love such a man? I promised to marry him because Uncle Hector insisted."

"That is plain." Ned concluded to go a step further. "Has the day been set?" he ventured.

"Yes. It has gone so far as that," was the reply. "The ceremony is to take place on the 16th."

"One week from today."

"Yes."

Ned then proceeded to give an account of his late adventures—how he had fallen into the hands of Boris and subsequently escaped from the old house in Bascome street.

"I never heard of such wretches!" the girl exclaimed. "What am I to do?"

"I am going to do something myself," answered Ned. "I am going to thwart those rascals if it costs me my life. Do not tell Mr. Iliff anything at present. Let the plot go on. If I don't place those scamps behind the bars it will be very strange."

"They will turn on you."

"Oh, they've done that already," smiled the youth. "Please show no suspicion of the plot when Basil Batch calls."

"I'll do my best not to, but it will take a mighty effort," said the girl.

In a minute Ned was on the street, his head full of startling thoughts as he made his way to his little room in a quiet street. His blood tingled whenever he thought of the plot against Hector Iliff, and he did not seek his pillow till the night was well advanced.

All at once he found himself sitting upright in bed with cold chills thruout his body. He was sure he had turned out the gas, but it was now burning, and he could see everything in the little bedroom.

"Don't move!" said a voice at his bedside. "Don't chirp, my bird, for the tables have been turned on you again!"

The face of the man who uttered these words was masked, but Ned could see the gleaming eyes, and knew that he had again fallen into the toils.

"I'll just truss you up a little," continued the man, in a triumphant voice. "They'll find you all right."

The form of the man suddenly descended, and in a jiffy the boy was so fastened in bed he could not stir a limb.

"You see I'll just blow out the light, but will leave the burner open," resumed the man. "In a little while the room will be full of gas fumes, and then the coroner will come."

The very heartlessness of the man seemed to freeze the boy's blood. He could not speak for the handkerchief which had been thrust into his mouth, and he was in a more desperate situation than when he was in English Julia's house. The situation was one of unspeakable horror.

In a few moments the room was wrapped in darkness and Ned heard footsteps on the stair beyond the door. He was the only roomer on that side of the house, and he knew that he was doomed by one of the plotters to perish miserably, with no one to rescue him. He could expect no help from Billy, for his friend had gone across the river for two days and was beyond reach.

When the house became still he gave himself up for lost. Already he could smell the escaping gas, and his lungs felt its insidious power. To perish thus seemed to benumb his senses. He must have been seen by his enemies, and they had taken this inhuman method of putting him off the trail.

He resolved that they should not succeed. There was too much at stake, and he tugged at his bonds with all his might. If he could but reach the window he was saved.

Beyond the window he saw the lights of the narrow street. The sight heartened him. He exerted all his strength and at last felt the bed yield beneath his efforts. Suddenly it broke, and he was lying on the floor, half smothered by the bedclothing, and the room reeked with the deadly fumes. More than half dead he twisted out of his thongs; he tore the gag from his mouth, and reaching the window, he threw up the sash and let the cool air in.

Then, with another effort, he staggered to the door, which he threw open, and tried to descend the stair, but his strength was gone. Halfway down the steps he fell in a heap and consciousness left him.

All at once he was aroused by wild cries and then a bright glare nearly blinded him.

In a moment he realized what had happened: the adjoining frame house was on fire, and the street below was filled with excited people!

With a cry he darted down the steps and jerked at the door, but it would not yield. Tongues of lurid flame were enveloping the house he was in. He turned again to the stair, but when he reached the top he saw that the fiery demon had doomed his home. He was trapped!

Was all this the work of the man who had come to him in the night?

Ned stood for a second on the landing, and then plunged toward a back window which looked out upon a dirty yard. He would leap to the ground below, and thus escape the terrible fate that impended; but when he touched the window sill it seemed to crumble beneath his hands, and he looked out upon a vortex of whirling fire in which he could read nothing but the end of his career.

CHAPTER VI.

PLUCKED.

AT AN early hour on the night after the fire which completely destroyed the home of Ned Castleman, a handsome woman, garbed in plain black, entered a large business building not far from Broadway and ascended a stairway to the second floor. There she paused and looked down a corridor until her gaze rested on a door with an oval ground glass front. With a smile on her lips she moved toward the portal and opened it.

In the room beyond two men were seated at a table, and they greeted the woman with a start.

"Good evening," she said, in a rich but determined voice. "I am very fortunate to find you in."

There was no reply, and without saying more she advanced until she stood at the table with her eyes fixed upon the larger man of the two.

"We'll dispense with an introduction," she went on. "I have not much time at my disposal here, as I am to be in my seat at the opera at eight. I have come for Mrs. Martin's ten thousand."

The two men looked at each other and the smaller one, who was Basil Batch, showed his teeth like a wolf.

"We haven't got Mrs. Martin's ten thousand!" cried he, viciously.

"Yes, you have. You robbed her thru your Great Alaska scheme. It was all she had—the savings of a lifetime. She is but one of your victims."

Borris Barrow by this time had found his tongue, and was getting to his feet, when something came out of the pocket of the woman's jacket and there was a distinct click. Mr. Barrow did not get up.

"You have known me for some time," the woman continued. "I am sometimes called the Countess, but I have other names. Mrs. Martin needs the money. It is in yonder safe for men of your ilk generally keep the proceeds of their rascality with them. I see you don't occupy the Broadway nest any more, but you haven't stopped your villainies. Please get the ten thousand, gentlemen, and do not cause me to be late at the opera."

"But I say," snarled Barrow. "I——"

"Come!" the Countess interrupted. "I am not going away empty-handed. Get the funds, I say!"

Mr. Barrow looked at his companion, who nodded slightly, and then he got upon his feet and moved across the room. The Countess followed him with her keen eyes, but at the same time she kept tab on Basil Batch. She saw Barrow open a little safe which was set in the wall and fumble there as if he were playing for time.

"I will wait three minutes," came over the woman's lips.

"And then what?" asked Batch.

"There will be a dead man at that safe if the money is not on the table!"

A cold chill swept thru Barrow's body, and he seized a pile of crisp notes which he carried to the table with ill grace. The Countess watched him as he counted out a number, which she picked up with a smile.

"You count correctly," said she. "Now I will bid you good night."

She backed toward the door with the revolver still in her hand and the glare of the two tigers in her face. As she was about to quit the room Boris Barrow roared out with all the fury of his nature:

"We'll make you pay for this!" cried he.

"Whenever you please," was the cool reply. "Mrs. Martin is a friend of mine, and I told her that such rascals as you men should not keep her money."

"We won't be satisfied till we've gotten even with you for this trick!"

"See here!" The Countess leaned for-

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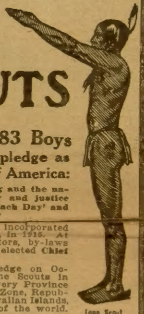

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"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected **Chief Totem** of the organization.

The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915. There are now Lone Scouts in every State in the United States, every Province in Canada, in Alaska, Panama Canal Zone, Republic of Panama, Porto Rico, Cuba, Hawaiian Islands, Philippine Islands and other parts of the world.

① The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. It is not a military organization. It is not a money-making proposition. There are no membership fees or dues to pay. There is no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given to the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 5 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents four months, 75 cents a year.

② The motto of the Lone Scouts of America is: "Do a Useful Thing Each Day." Every boy who lives up to the Lone Scout motto is going to be a successful man. The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts), while permitting them to work alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Wood-craft and scouting are only a part of the instructions in the Lone Scouts of America.

③ The Lone Scout pledge is so worded as to make the organization world-wide, not excluding any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scout must be in the best of health and physical condition all the time. He cannot be a real Scout and take any drink containing alcohol, or smoke cigarettes.

④ Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees, with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. The First Degree is Lone Scout, the emblem of which is a bronze badge bearing the figure of the Lone Scout Indian; Second is the Wood-craft Degree, the emblem of which is a bronze badge showing the Crossed Logs of the Council Fire; Third Degree is Lone Eagle and the eagle is shown on the silver badge of this Degree, the last of the Tepee Lodge. Next comes the Totem Pole Lodge, in which every member is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is a record of his achievements for many Degrees.

⑤ In applying for Membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

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ward a little and looked the two men squarely in the eye. "I am not to be deterred from my duty," said she. "You are still robbing people thru your schemes. I suppose Mr. Batch is exercising his mesmeric art in some cases. It all fits in. The time will come when both of you will be behind the bars, and then Justice will score a point. I'm not going to lose sight of you, no matter where you choose to hide. Your victims number hundreds, and you spare no one. The poor as well as the rich fall into your snares, and even now you are playing for a million and a pretty bride."

The two men seemed to gasp.

"Don't think that I am in ignorance concerning your plots," was the parting shot sent out by the woman at the door. "I am my own detective; but you are not going to win your last big game. Perhaps I will see you later, gentlemen," and with this she vanished, shutting the door behind her.

Scarcely had she disappeared when Boris Barrow jerked open a drawer in the table and took from it a revolver.

"She shan't get away that easy!" he cried, springing toward the door. "I'll have that money back, or——"

He was in the hall outside, and there he saw the woman in the light apparently waiting for him. He stopped suddenly and the weapon fell at his side.

"It's a game two can play at," she said softly, but with clearness. "Now, Mr. Barrow, you wouldn't keep me from the opera? No, you are too much of a gentleman for that," and Barrow was again looking into the muzzle of a revolver which was gripped by the Countess' outstretched hand.

The big swindler seemed to shrink within himself. He felt his face grow white, and in another moment, with a muttered curse, he slunk back into the office.

"Did you see her?" queried Batch.

"Yes; she was out there."

"Well?"

"She had the thing in her hand, and her finger was at the trigger."

"She would have killed you, Boris."

"That's why I let her get away," was the grim answer, accompanied by a faint smile. "That woman is our nemesis, and we must finish her."

"Of course. She's more dangerous than the man called Old Condor. We can get him whenever he turns up, but that woman is the danger."

"And what is more, from what she said, she must be onto our little game of old Iliff's million."

"To be sure she is," was the answer, with a nod.

A brief silence fell between the pair, and then Barrow observed with a smile:

"We're out just ten thousand by her coolness, and Mrs. Martin has got her own again. But what does it matter? A million is better than ten thousand any day."

Basil Batch pushed back his chair, but not before he had taken a revolver from a table drawer.

"You're not going out to look for the Countess?" asked his partner in villainy.

"Not I. She's too quick for Basil Batch. We'll get her some other way."

"To be sure we will."

"Now, if she should run across the boy we hired and who escaped from English Julia——"

"Don't let that trouble you for a moment," interjected Mr. Barrow, with a knowing wink.

"Why not?"

Boris leaned forward and struck the table with his hand.

"I'll explain," said he, eying his companion. "There was a fire in the city last night and—well, that boy is off of the trail forever. He called himself Ned Castleman, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Well, there's no Ned Castleman any more!"

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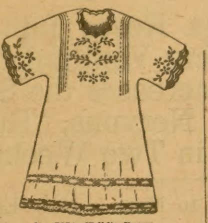

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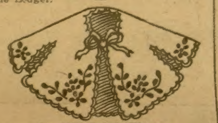

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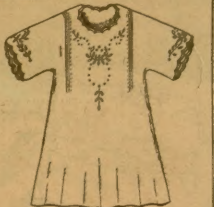

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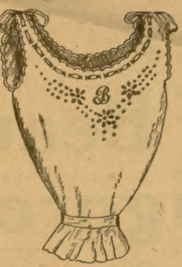

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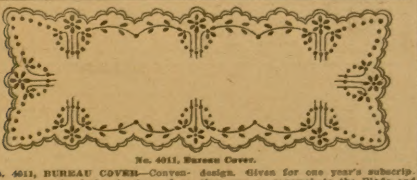

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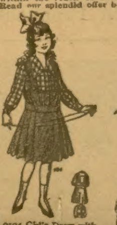

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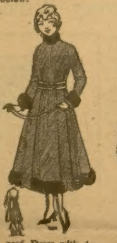

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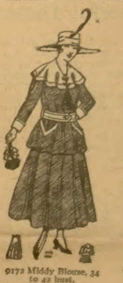

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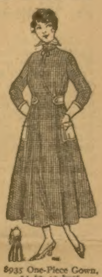

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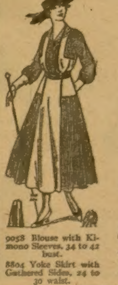
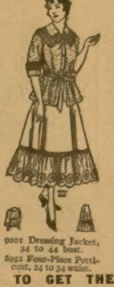
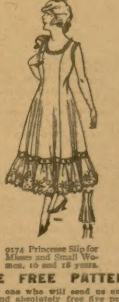


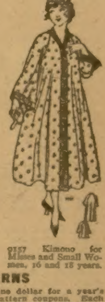
9058 Blouse with Kimono Sleeves, 34 to 42 bust.
8804 Yoke Skirt with Gathered Sides, 24 to 30 waist.



9201 Dressing Jacket, 34 to 44 bust.
8051 Four-Piece Petticoat, 24 to 34 waist.



9174 Princesse Slip for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



9157 Kimono for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it: To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making, with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

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To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

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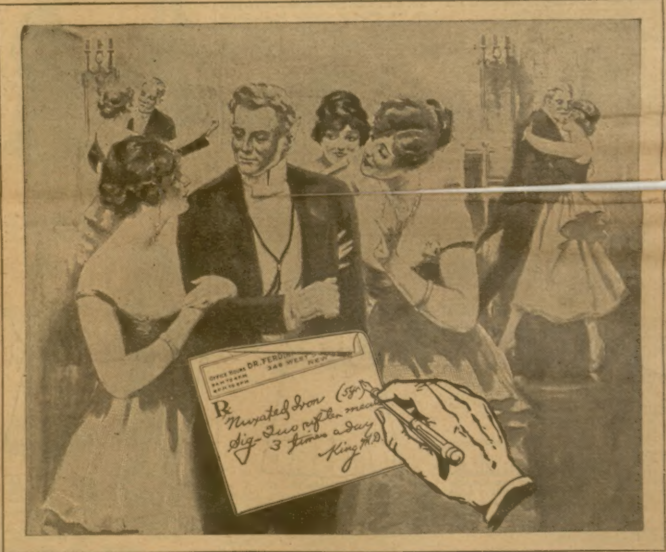
Nuxated Iron to Make New Age of Beautiful Women and Vigorous Iron Men

Say Physicians—Quickly Puts Roses Into The Cheeks of Women and Most Astonishing Youthful Power Into the Veins of Men—It Often Increases the Strength and Endurance of Delicate, Nervous, "Run-Down" Folks 200 Per Cent. in Two Weeks' Time.

A Wonderful Discovery Which Promises to Mark a New Era in Medical Science



NEW YORK, N. Y.—Since the remarkable discovery of organic iron, Nuxated Iron or "Fer Nuxate," as the French call it, has taken the country by storm. It is conservatively estimated that over five million persons daily are taking it in this country alone. Most astonishing results are reported from its use by both physicians and laymen. So much so that doctors predict that we shall soon have a new age of far more beautiful, rosy-cheeked women and vigorous iron men.

Dr. King, a New York physician and author, when interviewed on the subject, said: "There can be no vigorous iron men without iron. Pallor means anemia. Anemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anemic men and women is pale. The flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone; the brain fags and the memory fails and often they become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

"In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated cornmeal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked, are responsible for another grave iron loss.

"Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe old age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt."

Dr. Sauer, who has studied abroad in great European medical institutions, said: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver, heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their disease was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by a lack of iron in the blood.

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of twenty and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—Nuxated Iron had filled him with renewed life. At thirty he was in bad health; at forty-six he was care worn and nearly all in. Now at fifty a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques another New York physician, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists, and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians both in Europe and America. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in nuxated iron, that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron, and increase their strength 200 per cent or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.